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Testimony of Meg Helming before
the Committee on Health and Human Services
Neither For Nor Against

LD 1421: An Act to Clarify Parental Notifications Regarding Child Care Facility Investigations

April 16, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Meg Helming and I'm the Chief Operating Officer at the YMCA Alliance of Northern New England, which represents the 15 YMCAs in Maine. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on LD 1421: *An Act to Clarify Parental Notifications Regarding Child Care Facility Investigations*.

The 15 YMCAs in Maine are collectively the largest childcare provider in the state, serving children ages six weeks through adolescence. The YMCA is deeply committed to the safety and well-being of the children in our care. Child protection is at the core of our mission, and we strive to maintain open, transparent, and trusting relationships with the parents and guardians who entrust us with their children. Clear communication is fundamental to that trust, and we take this responsibility very seriously.

We recognize and support the intent behind LD 1421, which seeks to enhance parental awareness regarding investigations into potential violations within childcare settings. However, we would like to respectfully raise a concern that this legislation may have unintended consequences that could disrupt the essential relationships between childcare providers and the families they serve.

Under current protocol, parents are notified when an investigation concludes and a licensing violation has been substantiated. This approach balances transparency with due process, ensuring that parents are informed of validated concerns while avoiding premature alarm. The proposed requirement to notify families at the outset of an investigation—regardless of its outcome—could unintentionally create confusion, anxiety, and stress for both families and providers.

Based on our extensive experience serving children and their families, we anticipate that if parents are notified at the outset of an investigation, many will understandably reach out to their childcare provider with questions and concerns. However, during an active investigation, providers are often unable to share details or offer reassurance, even when the investigation stems from a complaint that ultimately proves to be unfounded. This inability to respond could unintentionally create confusion, stress, and frustration for parents—potentially eroding the trust that is so essential to a strong provider-parent relationship.

Strong relationships between childcare providers and families are critical to a child's healthy development. We worry that LD 1421 may inadvertently undermine these connections. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. We are committed to continuing to work in partnership with the state, with families, and with the broader childcare community to ensure the highest standards of care and safety for Maine's children.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Helming