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Testimony of Annie Colaluca before
the Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs
in support of

**LD 1689: An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Study
Expansion of Public Preschool and Early Care and Education**

May 1, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and honorable members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Annie Colaluca and I'm the Executive Director of Early Learning and Family Services for the Bath Area Family YMCA. I support LD 1689: *An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Study Expansion of Public Preschool and Early Care and Education*.

In 2008, the Bath Area Family YMCA entered a partnership with RSU1 school district to provide public pre-K as a partner in the CHOICES program (Children Having Opportunities in Collaborative Early Settings). In the 15 years of this partnership, the Y has provided pre-K to 32 children each year. The coveted slots at the Bath Y fill up quickly through a lottery system, and our waitlist continues to grow each year.

The unique nature of our partnership allows us to provide a full day of high-quality care for the children in our program. Children attend pre-K in a designated classroom at the Y from 8.30AM to 12PM, and then we seamlessly integrate them into wraparound programming for the remainder of the day. Practically speaking, this means that families have care for their children from 7AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday in one safe, convenient location. We know this care is particularly essential for parents that are working full time and don't have the ability to end their workday early, or transport their children from pre-K to a separate aftercare program in the middle of the workday.

Our public pre-K program employs state certified teachers and provides children with learning opportunities that prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. Additionally, we provide all children with weekly swim lessons, music classes, yoga, gymnastics and more through the resources we have available as a community-centered facility.

As Maine expands public pre-K availability, we must continue to lift up the mixed delivery model as a critical component of supporting working families with young children.

I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 1689.

Respectfully submitted,
Annie Colaluca
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