

Good afternoon,

My name is Margaret Sinclair and I am writing to provide testimony in support of LD 1955, An Act to Increase Child Care Affordability and Early Childhood Educator Stability which is being discussed on May 15, 2025.

I am a Mainer who grew up in Bangor and now lives in Westbrook. I'm a registered nurse at Maine Medical Center's emergency department, and I am a mother to a 3 year old boy named Charlie and have another baby due at the end of June.

As a lifelong Mainer, working class citizen, and parent- I'd like to provide testimony to what it's like trying to obtain and afford childcare in this state while also attempting to remain in the workforce and afford living expenses.

When I was pregnant with Charlie, my husband and I made the decision that I would cut my hours at work as a means to be able to care for our son. We knew that daycare waitlists were very long, we worried about placing our son in a daycare where the workers were overwhelmed/undertrained, and we knew it didn't make sense financially for me to remain a full time nurse in order to place our son in daycare.

For 6 months after maternity leave, I worked nearly every Saturday and Sunday in the ER and spent Monday through Friday with Charlie. This was challenging for my family as it meant very little time where me, my husband, and my son could spend any meaningful time together, aside from the 5:30pm-bedtime portion of Monday through Friday, which all parents know is hardly optimal for any semblance of quality time.

When Charlie was around 9 months old, my mom and her husband made the decision to move from Florida back to Maine- the primary intention of this was to help me and my husband care for our son. I'm grateful every day that they did this, but discouraged that such a drastic life change needed to be made on their part in order to make my small family's life more sustainable.

As Charlie approached 18 months of age, it became abundantly clear to me that he needed to spend more time with other children. Me, my parents, and my husband made every effort to provide him a chance to play with other kids- we would frequent the library, parks, neighbor's houses, play rooms, etc. But as winter of 2023 approached, I knew Charlie would need more enrichment and play time. In addition to that, after one and a half years of not having a day off, I knew that I needed a little more help, too.

We decided to enroll Charlie in an in home daycare about 15 minutes from our home. He goes there two days a week. I consider this a luxury for both of us. Charlie gets to socialize, be engaged with his excellent childcare provider who fosters an enriching environment, and get to know the world in a more autonomous way. Meanwhile, I get to do the things that are very challenging to do with a toddler around, such as life administration tasks, chores, anything that requires undivided attention.

This luxury of 8 days of childcare per month (minus closure or sick days) costs my family \$10,400 annually.

To be completely honest, we haven't quite figured out what we are going to do in terms of childcare with baby #2. It is not within our budget to pay approximately \$1,800 a month for childcare - which is the estimated cost if we send two children. It feels wrong to assume that my parents are going to do even more than they are already doing for us, especially considering they themselves are still working. There is a potential that I will cut my hours at work even more and go per diem, or that I return to working most weekends- however surrendering time with my husband and children (all of us together) in order to afford to live enrages me.

The implications of the inaccessibility and astronomical costs of childcare affect more than just the individual family.

The work place is affected. I personally know dozens and dozens of nurses who have cut their work hours in order to care for their children. Reflecting on the chaos that is inpatient healthcare, it's disheartening that good workers are forced to choose between gainful employment and being a full time parent.

Local businesses are affected. Our budget is incredibly tight. Most of our money goes to our mortgage, utilities, groceries, and childcare.

Our health is affected. I implore you all to look into social determinants of health and how they affect our bodies on a biological level. The constant stress that working class families face when trying to juggle caretaking, work, and affording to live has undeniable consequences on our physical health.

I write this all from a place of privilege. Despite the challenges we face, I know wholeheartedly that my children will be safe, have access to healthcare, have a roof over their heads, and never will wonder where their next meal is going to come from.

It is truly abhorrent that we live in a state where so many parents in Maine cannot say the same for their children, all the while Republicans and other greedy lawmakers want to continue taking safety nets from the poor and the working class (who are quickly becoming synonymous with one another) instead of taxing the rich.

LD 1955 is a tangible step in the definite right direction towards solving the childcare crisis in our state. There is a lack of affordable, accessible childcare in Maine- and this bill will help combat that. Childcare work is **so important** and those workers deserve higher wages in order to promote retention of good workers in that realm.

There is so much work to be done in order to support working class families in Maine, and to foster an environment where parents don't need to forego growing their family due to not being able to afford to do so despite what should be an adequate income, and I have faith that Senate President Daughtry and the rest of the Maine State Legislature that supports working Mainers will continue doing that work and fighting that fight.

Thank you for your time, your careful thought and consideration into law that helps the working class is incredibly appreciated.

Best,  
Meg Sinclair

Margaret Sinclair  
Westbrook, MSNA  
LD 1955

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