

May 15, 2025



**Testimony of J.R. Kenny, Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
In Support of LD 1955: “An Act to Increase Child Care Affordability and Early Childhood
Educator Stability in Maine”**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in strong support of **LD 1955**, “An Act to Increase Child Care Affordability and Early Childhood Educator Stability in Maine.” I submit this testimony on behalf of the **Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs**, an organization deeply committed to ensuring that all children in Maine have access to safe, enriching, and high-quality early childhood experiences.

As one of Maine’s most accessible youth development organizations, Boys & Girls Clubs serve thousands of children and families across the state. Every day, we witness firsthand the pressures working families face in finding and affording reliable, quality child care — and the equally critical challenges facing the dedicated early educators who care for and nurture our youngest learners.

LD 1955 offers thoughtful, targeted solutions to two of the greatest challenges in Maine’s child care system: affordability for families and the retention and compensation of the early childhood workforce.

Child care is one of the largest expenses many Maine families face, often exceeding the cost of housing or college tuition. Too many parents are forced to make impossible choices — between paying for child care and meeting other essential needs, or between staying in the workforce and caring for their children. This not only affects family well-being, but also our workforce participation and overall economic stability.

LD 1955’s proposed investments in child care affordability will help ensure that families can access the care they need to thrive both at home and in the workforce. By expanding financial assistance and easing the burden on working families, this bill will allow more parents to pursue education, careers, and opportunities that strengthen our communities.

Just as concerning is the ongoing crisis in retaining and fairly compensating early childhood educators. These professionals perform some of the most important and demanding work in our communities, yet are often paid less than workers in other sectors with comparable

responsibilities. This has led to high turnover, program closures, and a shortage of available care.

LD 1955 directly addresses this issue by creating wage supplements, scholarships, apprenticeships, and direct financial assistance for child care professionals. These measures will help stabilize the workforce, attract new talent, and honor the essential contributions of those who educate and care for Maine's children during their most critical years of development.

Maine's future depends on strong, sustainable early care and education systems. By enacting LD 1955, the Legislature has an opportunity to make strategic, long-lasting investments in our families, our workforce, and our youngest citizens.

On behalf of the Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, I urge you to vote **ought to pass** on LD 1955 and help ensure that every child in Maine has the strong start they deserve, and that those who care for them can afford to remain in the field.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

J.R. Kenny
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Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs