



Mary-Rita Reinhard, Interim Executive Director
Maine Community Action Partnership
c/o Community Concepts, Inc.
240 Bates Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-795-4065

Jason Parent, CEO/Executive Director
Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.
771 Main St.
Presque Isle, ME 04769
207-764-3721

James Martin, CEO
Community Concepts, Inc.
240 Bates Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-739-6553

Rota Knott, Executive Director
Downeast Community Partners
248 Bucksport Road
Ellsworth, ME 04605
207-610-5904

Suzanne Walsh, CEO
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
97 Water Street
Waterville, ME 04901
207-859-1579

Claire Berkowitz, President & CEO
Midcoast Maine Community Action
34 Wing Farm Parkway
Bath, ME 04530
207-442-7963

Joe Everett, President & CEO
Opportunity Alliance
50 Lydia Lane
South Portland, ME 04106
207-523-5055

Kara Hay, President & CEO
Penquis
262 Harlow St.
Bangor, ME 04402
207-973-3500

Donna Kelley, President & CEO
Waldo Community Action Partners
9 Field St.
Belfast, ME 04915
207-338-6809

Noelle Coyne, CEO
Western Maine Community Action, Inc.
2A Church St.
East Wilton, ME 04234
207-743-7763

Carter Friend, Executive Director
York County Community Action Corporation
6 Spruce St.
Sanford, ME 04073
207-324-5762

Testimony in Support of LD 1736, An Act to Increase the Supply of Child Care Services Through the Use of Contracts

May 15, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Sue Powers and I am an early childhood consultant from Mapleton, delivering testimony on behalf of the Maine Community Action Partnership, a statewide organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of Maine people by advocating for, promoting and supporting the work of the Maine community action agencies. I work with childcare providers and early childhood educators across the state to provide quality early care to families. I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 1736, and believe when combined with LD 1859, and LD 1955—will take meaningful strides toward solving Maine's childcare crisis.

LD 1736 empowers the Office of Child and Family Services to use contracts—rather than only subsidies—to directly support child care providers in delivering care for high-need populations, including infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and families in underserved areas.

Early childcare providers struggle with the uncertainty of enrollment and revenue week to week. Through the use of contract, we can stabilize childcare enrollment opportunities for the highest need populations of children, those with disabilities and our youngest infants and toddlers.

When parents cannot access reliable childcare, they cannot report to work on a consistent schedule. Unstable childcare is attributed to an estimated **\$403 million annually** in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue due to childcare challenges. These losses not only affect a family's earnings, but also impact an employer's productivity and ability to provide services and the general public's ability to access services.

Infants and toddlers are the most expensive and hardest-to-place age group in childcare settings, often requiring higher staff-to-child ratios. Providing care to children with disabilities is another area that requires more staff resource thus pushing the cost up. Both of these groups lower staff to child ratio, pushing cost up. Contracts could stabilize care to these populations. Contract-based funding offers predictability for providers and ensures consistent availability of slots for priority populations.

This bill is a strategic investment in supply-building and service stability, particularly in rural and low-income communities. I urge you to support this bill to stabilize childcare opportunities to these high needs populations of children. Stabilizing childcare enrollment ultimately stabilizes the workforce and the economy.

Together, these three bills offer a comprehensive response to Maine's child care challenges by strengthening supply, increasing affordability, supporting education, and honoring the workforce. I respectfully urge the committee to vote "**Ought to Pass**" on LD 1736, LD 1859, and LD 1955.