

# **Testimony in Support of LD 1414: An Act to Support and Sustain Maine's Child Care Workforce**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Wednesday 1/21/2026**

Dear Distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Melissa Harding, and I live in the rural town of Jackson ME. I am a parent of 4 beautiful children, a community advocate, and a working parent. Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony **in support of LD 1414: An Act to Support and Sustain Maine's Child Care Workforce**

As a parent, I want to work, provide for my family, and know my child is safe and cared for. But today, that's out of reach for too many Maine families. These costs come at the same time families are least able to afford them, right after welcoming a new baby and returning to work.

For parents like me, that means having to delay returning to work, take on debt, or make career sacrifices, not because we want to—but because affordable infant and toddler care simply doesn't exist in many parts of our state.

LD 1414 offers a thoughtful, data-driven solution that recognizes the true cost of quality infant and toddler care and the value of Maine's working parents. By strengthening rates and planning for non-traditional hour care, this bill moves us closer to a child care system that works—for families, for providers, and for our state's economy.

LD 1414 also supports developing **non-traditional hour care**, which is critical for parents working evenings, weekends, or early mornings—jobs that are common in health care, hospitality, and manufacturing.

A planning grant program can help providers build capacity for these types of care, making the system more responsive to real family needs while supporting diverse work schedules across our economy.

I respectfully urge you to **vote Ought to Pass on LD 1414**.

Thank you for your time and for your continued leadership on child care issues.

Sincerely,

Melissa Harding

Jackson, Maine

