

Written Testimony on LD 1414 & LD 2066

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator ____, Representative ____, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Caelyn Callahan, and I am a parent of three children living in Westbrook, Maine. I am also a trained Parent Ambassador, and I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity in support of LD 1414 and LD 2066.

After relocating and becoming a single-parent household following a domestic violence situation, I care for three children Monday through Wednesday and two children the remainder of the week due to a shared custody arrangement. My children attend Fiddlehead Charter School, which is centrally located between my home and my son's father, allowing continuity for school and therapies. They have high needs, requiring careful coordination of educational and therapeutic supports.

Fiddlehead offers a before- and after-school program that would be ideal for our schedule. However, it does not accept child care subsidy, and the subsidy itself is currently on hold, making part-time care that fits our family's needs inaccessible. After relocating, I was unable to simultaneously maintain child care, school attendance, required therapies, and employment. This reflects the broader challenge of an understaffed and underfunded child care system that cannot accommodate flexible schedules or high-needs children.

High-quality, accessible child care is more than convenience. When children have a safe, consistent place to go every day, the impact of trauma in their lives is reduced, allowing them to focus on learning, manage behavior, and develop social skills. Programs with appropriate staff-to-child ratios support children in building confidence, preparing for school, and laying the foundation for lifelong learning and workforce participation.

Maine's aging population, low wages, and high cost of living make it increasingly difficult for working-age families to remain in the state. Supporting and stabilizing the child care workforce through LD 1414 and LD 2066 allows programs to expand capacity, retain staff, and provide flexible, high-quality care that meets the real needs of families.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support both bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Caelyn Callahan

Westbrook, Maine