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Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1414, An Act to Support and Sustain Maine's Child Care Workforce and LD 2066, An Act to Establish the Child Care Employment Award

Health and Human Services Committee

January 21, 2026

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Maine AAP is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents. The Maine AAP is in support of LD 1414 and LD 2066, which seeks to ensure affordable child care to Maine families by supporting the child care workforce.

Access to reliable, affordable child care is crucial to ensuring children and families can thrive. When parents can't find child care due to a lack of providers in their area or affordability, it forces them to make decisions that can impact the health and well-being of their families. This may result in families having to rely on the income of only one parent, or having to make a decision to go without basic needs, like health insurance or dental care, in order to afford the high cost of child care. Over time, these decisions can strain positive family relationships and create lasting long-term effects.

Although child care plays an absolutely vital role in the lives of our children and the very functioning of our society and economy, child care educators are undervalued and undercompensated. Child care providers are placed in an impossible position where they must attempt to keep costs as affordable as possible for families, while attracting and retaining child care educators. This is unsustainable, and requires multiple solutions to meet the needs of children and families across Maine, and ensure that child care providers and educators are able to provide the care that our state relies on.

Together, LD 1414 and LD 2066 address the needs of the child care workforce. LD 1414 increases CCAP payment rates from 10% to 20% above market rate, reflecting the true cost of providing child care to Maine's youngest children and ensuring that child care businesses can afford to continue providing essential care to Maine families. LD 2066 addresses a key obstacle to workforce sustainability: child care workers not being able to afford child care for their own families, by establishing an Employment Award. These bills would provide a needed investment in the child care workforce, helping to ensure that Maine families and child care providers are able to succeed.

In order to support Maine families and businesses, we must support the industry that makes life and work in Maine possible - our child care providers. We urge you to support LD 1414 and LD 2066. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeleine DesFosses

Advocacy and Public Health Manager

Maine AAP

