

Testimony on Childcare Affordability
LD 2212 An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

Kevin Ready, Lewiston

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Kevin Ready. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm a proud union member and a postal truck driver, but the most important work I do is as a father of two young kids. I am testifying neither for nor against the proposed budget but to urge you to fund the child care support that my family and so many working families desperately need.

It's so important for our kids to get quality child care, but the cost of care is just too high for many working families like mine. It can easily cost \$15,000 or more for a full year of tuition, and I know the people getting paid to provide care aren't making enough. Working people need help affording the cost of child care, otherwise we are stuck barely getting by or falling further behind.

A while back, when my family heard about the Child Care Affordability Program, we were excited to apply. I remember telling my co-workers about the program and hearing how big a difference it would make in their lives, too. But when the funding dried up and the waitlist was implemented, it was like the rug was pulled out from us just when it seemed like things were about to get a little better.

Without that support, our family couldn't afford to pay for child care which meant that my wife couldn't work. In the end, our family was worse off financially and struggled to pay the bills.

I'm a proud member and leader of my union and I'm on the executive board of the Maine AFL-CIO. We know the high cost of child care consistently ranks near the top of the list of issues impacting union members across the state, and I know there are thousands of working families like mine that could benefit from this program. That's why I'm here today.

I ask all of you who want to make a real difference in the lives of working people to fully fund the Child Care Affordability Program so families like mine can get the support we need.

Thank you for the chance to share my perspective and I am happy to answer any questions.