

February 17, 2026

Crystal Parritt  
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Director of Childcare Services  
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**RE: LD 2212**

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Crystal Parritt. I live in Naples and work in Lewiston. I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 2212.

When we think of Maine's economy, we often think about the many industries and trades that span our large and diverse state. What we do not often think about are those working quietly in the background — early childhood educators. We are the workforce behind the workforce. We support Maine's families by providing safe, high-quality childcare, often while operating on tight budgets and earning low wages.

Affordable childcare allows parents and guardians to work, pursue education, and fully participate in Maine's economy. When families have access to reliable care, businesses thrive, and local economies grow. Investing in childcare is not just support for families — it is an investment in Maine's future. The return on that investment is powerful and long-lasting. Families across Maine are burdened by rising costs and stagnant wages. Continued funding for Maine's Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) is essential to ensure that children can learn and develop in nurturing, high-quality environments during the most critical years of brain development.

In addition to supporting families, CCAP has supported educators through the Educator Award Program. This initiative — along with the wage supplement — has been one of the most effective tools for recruiting and retaining qualified staff. At my own program, four staff

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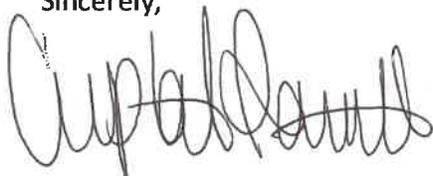
**Central Maine**

members have been able to continue their vital work with children and families because of this support, while also ensuring their own children receive the care they need and deserve. The demand for this incentive speaks volumes — it reached capacity and transitioned to a waitlist.

Funding for childcare is essential to Maine families and communities across all income levels. I urge you to prioritize sustainable revenue solutions and protect critical programs like childcare so that Maine's children, families, and workforce can continue to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Crystal Parritt', written over a faint, illegible background.

Crystal Parritt  
Director of Childcare Services  
YWCA Central Maine

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