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I'm asking you to include \$15 million of ongoing investment into the Child Care Affordability Program.

My name is Kaitie Gilmour I'm the owner and director of Laugh and Learn Academy in Houlton where we serve 84 families in our community 72% of which are on some sort of subsidy majority of those being CCAP.

We are already seeing the negative effects of the CCAP waitlist. Not long ago, I could meet with families, determine that they would possibly be eligible for CCAP help them with an application and have them approved within a week or so. Now with the waitlist those families have to apply and then wait with no end in site, potentially losing their employment opportunities as well as their childcare spot or putting them in financial strain while they wait for funds. These families are eligible for CCPAP for a reason they cannot financially afford childcare without the help of subsidy and to require these families to pay out-of-pocket for childcare expenses means that families are making hard choices between paying for necessities or paying their childcare bill so that they can go to work. I see this every day in the form of past due bills and conversations with parents struggling to stay afloat. Parents need these CCAP funds to work and support their families.

Not only is this having a negative effect on the families that we serve but childcare businesses as they try and help families navigate an unknown wait time for the subsidies that they qualify for. The state of Maine chose to invest many tax dollars into in childcare in the recent past, but all of that goes to waste if those child cares have to continue to shut down because of the lack of childcare spots they can't fill due to the under funding of the CCAP program. Razor tight profit margins for childcare providers means that every spot counts and the 1,200 plus children on the waitlist currently are needed to keep childcare centers full and in business.