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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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Testimony of Katie Parker for the
Committees on Appropriations & Financial Affairs and Health & Human Services
**LD 2212 An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the
Expenditures of State Government**
February 18, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Stading Committee on Health & Human Services, my name is Katie Parker, and I am the COO of the YMCA Alliance of Northern New England which represents 15 YMCAs in the state of Maine.

Collectively, Maine's YMCAs are the largest childcare provider in the state. Every day, our early childhood education programs serve thousands of children across the state. These programs provide safe, nurturing, and enriching environments that support healthy development and allow parents to participate fully in the workforce. Today, Maine YMCAs operate 20 early learning program sites serving over 1,200 of Maine's youngest children. In addition, Maine YMCAs provide before and after school care for nearly 3,000 youth in communities throughout the state.

We are testifying to urge the Legislature to include funding for the Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) in the budget. LD 1955, sponsored by Senate President Daughtry, recently passed out of the Health & Human Services Committee. As amended, this bill would provide \$15 million in ongoing funding for CCAP to help Maine families afford child care.

The need could not be more urgent. Child care costs in Maine now rival mortgage payments, putting reliable care out of reach for many working families. YMCAs and other providers work hard to keep rates affordable, but we face the same pressures as every employer: rising operating costs, the need to offer competitive wages, and the responsibility to maintain consistent, high-quality care. Without support, too many families are left on waitlists or forced to make impossible choices.

A \$15 million investment in CCAP is an investment in Maine's current and future economy. It strengthens the workforce, supports children during their most critical years of development, and ensures that providers like the YMCAs can continue to meet the needs of families across the state.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maine's children and families.

Sincerely,

Katie Parker

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