

## **Testimony presented to the Joint Committees on Appropriations & Health and Human Services**

**SUPPORT: PART A, p. A-134, Item 0798  
Other Special Revenue placeholder for MCT Tax Check-Off Donations**

**Presented by: MAINE CHILDREN'S TRUST**

**February 21, 2023**

Senators Rotundo & Baldacci, Representatives Sachs and Meyer and members of the Joint Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health & Human Services, my name is Ben Gilman and I am the Board Chair of the Maine Children's Trust. We are the second oldest authorized recipient of taxpayer donations made via the tax-check-off option on the Maine Income Tax return. We are here today to strongly support our tax check off on the Maine Income Tax Form. Item 0798 is the placeholder for the donations made by Maine citizens through our tax check-off to help prevent child abuse and neglect.

### **Information on the Maine Children's Trust**

The Maine Children's Trust is the only statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Trust was created by the Maine Legislature in 1985, and in 1994 legislation was enacted that established the Children's Trust as a separate non-profit organization outside of state government. The 1994 legislation also established some governance rules, activity requirements and guidance on the use of our tax check-off revenue.

Some requirements of the Trust statute (Title 22, chapter 1058) include but are not limited to:

- Develop, initiate, propose or recommend ideas for innovations in rules, laws, policies and programs concerning child abuse and neglect to the Governor, the Legislature, state executive agencies, the business community and other entities
- Develop and administer a granting program for community based organizations doing child abuse prevention

### **History of the Tax Check-Off Funding Since Inception**

The Trust was one of the original tax check-off recipients, appearing on the Maine income tax form in January of 1985, slightly later than the Maine Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Fund, which was created in 1983. Since that time, the tax check-off has been an important to providing direct funds to community based programs addressing the prevention of the abuse and neglect of Maine's children. Over the past few years, following the tragic deaths of several children in high profile cases, Maine taxpayers have increased their donations through the check-off.

Our statute requires 10% of our annual check-off receipts are placed into an escrow account. The remainder of these taxpayer donations is available to be utilized in direct grants made to community organizations for the support of child abuse prevention programming.

### **Other Considerations for the Appropriations & Human Services Committees**

- We are annually appointed by the Governor to apply for and administer one Federal Grant, the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grant (CBCAP). Maine Children's Trust receives \$175,000 annually based on Maine's population, plus an additional amount of about \$140,000 in leveraged funds. There is a 20% match requirement, which each state must fulfill. The Federal Government allows the Children's Trust to count tax check-off revenues toward the State match. This funding is also used for granting and is woven into all of the prevention programs and efforts that the Trust oversees.
- This is a convenient way for Maine Taxpayers to support child abuse prevention. Now included as part of most automated tax preparation software, it is extremely easy to use, and we believe provides greater donations than we would otherwise receive should taxpayers have to remember to write and mail a tax deductible check prior to year end.

We have also presented along with this testimony a copy of the Trust's Annual Report to the Governor and the HHS Committee. There is a long history for the tax check-off program. The check-off donations are very important for the Maine Children's Trust because these funds, so generously donated, help us to leverage critical and beneficial federal funds to address child abuse and neglect in Maine.

Thank you for your time.

Ben Gilman, Esq.  
Drummond Woodsum  
Portland, ME  
[bgilman@dwmlaw.com](mailto:bgilman@dwmlaw.com)