



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Testimony of Meg Helming before
the Committee On Taxation
in support of
**LD 1222: An Act to Expand Child Care Services Through
an Employer-Supported Tax Credit**

April 11, 2023

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and distinguished members of the Committee On Taxation, my name is Meg Helming and I'm the COO for the YMCA Alliance of Northern New England, which represents the 15 YMCAs in Maine. The YMCA strongly supports LD 1222: *An Act to Expand Child Care Services Through an Employer-Supported Tax Credit*.

Collectively, the 15 YMCAs in Maine are the largest childcare provider in the state. We serve thousands of children in our early childhood education programs, before/afterschool programs, and summer camp. These programs provide children with safe, nurturing and enriching care, and are a critical component of our state's infrastructure to support working parents and our economy.

Unfortunately, the childcare system is under incredible strain. The Ys have extensive waitlists of families trying to access care for their children. The wait for an infant or toddler slot in particular can easily exceed a year. This leaves parents to make incredibly hard decisions around placing their children in unlicensed care, cutting back their work hours, or leaving the workforce altogether. Despite our best efforts, the system is failing Maine families.

Even if families are able to secure a coveted childcare slot for their child, they are then faced with the challenge of paying for the care. I am acutely aware of this struggle as a parent of a 2.5 year old and 7 month old. My husband and I pay \$566 per week for childcare – that is nearly \$29,000 per year. My experience is not an anomaly. The average cost for childcare in Maine is \$10,000 - \$15,000 per child per year. To say that this puts an incredible strain on families is an understatement.

LD 1222 presents a pathway for the State to help families, employers, and childcare providers work together in support of a common goal – increasing access to reliable and affordable care so parents can enter and remain in the workforce. As a childcare provider, we so appreciate the business community's recognition that addressing Maine's childcare challenges should not and cannot rest on the backs of parents or childcare providers alone. We all must work together.

We urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 1222.

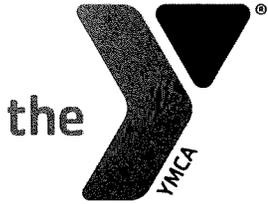
Respectfully submitted,

YMCA Alliance of Northern New England

Maine YMCAs:

Auburn-Lewiston YMCA • Bangor Region YMCA • Bath Area Family YMCA • Boothbay Region YMCA • Central Lincoln County YMCA • Down East Family YMCA • Kennebec Valley YMCA • Mount Desert Island YMCA • Old Town-Orono YMCA • Penobscot Bay YMCA • Sanford-Springvale YMCA • State YMCA of Maine • Waldo County YMCA • YMCA of Greater Waterville • YMCA of Southern Maine

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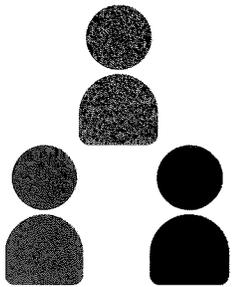


WE'RE HERE FOR GOOD.

MAINE COMMUNITY IMPACT SNAPSHOT 2023

15 YMCAS

75 PROGRAM
LOCATIONS



71,000

MEMBERS &
PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

INCLUDING

36,000 CHILDREN
20,000 SENIORS



1,700
STAFF EMPLOYED

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

ANNUALLY, WE SERVE:



1,400 IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

2,300 IN BEFORE/AFTERSCHOOL



4,500 IN DAY CAMP

1,700 IN OVERNIGHT CAMP



ABOUT US: The YMCA Alliance of Northern New England supports collaboration amongst the Ys and community partners in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont to increase our impact and advocate for positive change in our communities. The 25 Ys in Northern New England serve more than 140,000 people across 155 program locations every year.