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May 1, 2023

Senator Joseph Rafferty, Chair  
Representative Michael Brennan, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1520, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services to Study Placing Child Care Facilities in Secondary Schools*

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

This letter is to provide information regarding the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education's opposition to LD 1520, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services to Study Placing Child Care Facilities in Secondary Schools*. This resolve directs the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services to jointly study placing child care facilities in secondary schools to serve the children of school staff and employees, as well as community members (where space is available). The study is required to consider the purposes of such a facility including serving as a classroom for secondary and adult education students taking child care education and development courses, allowing them to obtain a certificate for completing two years or coursework.

There is nothing in current licensing rule or statute that prevents a secondary school interested in opening and operating a facility as envisioned in this study bill from doing so. In fact, Title 20-A, Chapter 223 authorizes School Administrative Units (SAUs) to establish child care programs for the children of students attending the SAU and to children of teachers or other SAU employees. Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) licensing, DOE, and CDS staff stand ready to work with any interested provider, including a secondary school, to establishing a childcare center. In addition, the infrastructure grant program described above is available as a resource as well. Thus, we do not believe this study is necessary and instead would take staff away from work on the existing initiatives.

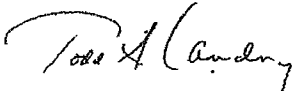
To be clear, neither OCFS nor the DOE oppose opportunities to expand child care capacity or the opportunities for individuals to pursue careers in the early education field. OCFS and DOE are opposed to this study because it would take time and effort away from considerable work being devoted to expanding the quality and accessibility of child care, including supporting the early care workforce.

These initiatives include significant investments in child care infrastructure. In particular, the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan allocated \$15 million for providers to open, renovate, expand, and/or construct new child care programs. Through this initiative providers receive grants for projects that will expand child care capacity statewide, and this will benefit Mainer workers across all sectors. We anticipate that through this work nearly 1400 child care slots statewide will be created.

OCFS and DOE are also supporting early care and education staff and individuals interested in pursuing a career in this field through initiatives such as the child care provider salary stipends, training and professional development, and scholarship opportunities for higher education in early care and education. Several Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have early care and education certification programs that already allow high school students to earn a certificate. OCFS and the DOE work collaboratively to support the growth of Maine early care staff and programs.

We wanted you to be aware of the above information as you consider this bill going forward. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Todd A. Landry  
Director  
Office of Child and Family Services

DocuSigned by:



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Megan Welter  
Associate Commissioner of Public Education  
Department of Education