

Senator Nicole Grohoski, Representative Joe Perry and members of the Taxation Committee,

My name is Grace Vanuza Rogers, I'm a resident of South Portland and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1544. This bill would make a big difference for the families and the children I work with every day. It would also make a difference for my children as well.

Child care is an expense that puts families into a challenging situation. Many working families don't make enough to pay for child care but child care makes it possible to work. We're often faced with an impossible question: do we work more so we can afford child care but never see our kids? Or do we work less and find ourselves unable to pay our bills? For me, this would help me pay for part of the child care for my son Francis (2 yrs. old) and my son Oliver (9 months) so I can work a full time job.

I work as a case manager with low income immigrant families. Last year, with the enhanced federal Child Tax Credit, I saw the smile on the faces of the children when their parents were able to get them presents for Christmas or buy some extra food. Parents could breathe for a moment. I saw a smile on these kids' faces because parents could afford to send them to school with decent clothes and enroll them in after school programs that help them develop into the vibrant, smart, beautiful people we want here in Maine.

This past year has not been easy on Mainers with children. LD1544 would give families with children a small benefit that goes a long way. I'm here today to urge you all to pass LD1544 to help build success for our Maine children. Every child deserves this opportunity no matter their parent's current situation. LD1544 in Maine would help so many parents like me, that little boost that would come at just the right time- three hundred fifty dollars a year may not be a lot, but it would make a big difference in a child's family.

I urge you to allow this bill to pass. It will impact the lives of so many families, mine included . I believe children are the legacy of this nation and our state. Investing in them is going to allow us to build a sustainable future for all.

Thank you,
Grace Vanuza Rogers