



May 24, 2023

RE: Testimony in support of LD1988 An Act to Provide Critical Matching Funds for Child Care Services on the Northern Maine Community College Campus

Good afternoon Senator Joseph Rafferty and Representative Michael Brennan.

Chairs Rafferty and Brennan and Committee Members, my name is Timothy Crowley and I have had the honor of serving as the President of Northern Maine Community College for the past 21 years. Over that time I have worked to build a private-public partnership that has provided opportunities for the college to respond to the needs of the communities we serve. We are grateful for the support we receive from the taxpayers of the State of Maine and from private donors to respond to those needs.

As you know, we have a childcare crisis in our state. The lack of availability of childcare providers is having an impact on the workforce and on higher education. Recently the Speaker of the House visited Aroostook County and met with childcare providers and community leaders to learn more about the impact limited childcare services are having on our area. I appreciate the Aroostook County Delegation and the Speaker coming to NM to learn about the challenge this crisis is creating for employers and for students.

NMCC has offered an Early Childhood Education Program preparing childcare providers for the workforce for many years. It is a program that is in high demand. We are working to expand this program to respond to the demand. One of the challenges with this expansion is having enough clinical sites for ECE students to get their practical experience.

For the past year, we have been working on creating a model school for our Early Childhood Education Program. This project creates a childcare center on our campus that would provide childcare services to our students while also providing a learning environment for our students. We plan to renovate a building on our campus to house our Early Childhood Education Childcare Center.

Expansion of the Early Childhood Education Program to include an on-site childcare center would allow the college to guarantee field experience that meets national accreditation standards. The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is an agency that provides national accreditation.

Many of our current students in our ECE program also live on campus and do not have transportation. Those students struggle with the ability to get to field experiences that may be up to 40 miles away from campus. With a center on campus, these students would also be able to complete their hours on campus. The expansion would also provide the opportunity to offer additional training to current individuals that work in childcare centers to become certified.

Having a childcare center on campus would also assist parents who are students and are struggling with being able to be successful students due to daycare challenges.

The NMCC Foundation has worked to raise \$1.5 million to support this project. The design and development for this project are complete and the bid documents have been prepared. The estimate for the renovation of the building we would like to convert into our Early Childhood Education and Training Center exceeds the funds available. As you know construction costs and delays have had a significant impact on renovation and construction projects.

We have an opportunity to expand a program that is in demand and add 47 childcare slots that could serve students who are looking to enter the workforce but lack the education and

training to do so. This project's private and public investment reduces the funding needed from the taxpayers of the state of Maine to renovate a facility.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Timothy Crowley".

Timothy Crowley, President