



Testimony of Rita Furlow,  
Senior Policy Analyst, Maine Children's Alliance  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health & Human Services  
LD 202

An Act to An Act to Increase the Number of Children a Family Child Care Provider May Care for  
Without Having to Be Licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services

March 14, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Health and Human Services, my name is Rita Furlow. I am the Senior Policy Analyst at the Maine Children's Alliance. I am here today to speak in opposition to LD 202, *An Act to An Act to Increase the Number of Children a Family Child Care Provider May Care for Without Having to Be Licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services*. The Maine Children's Alliance, a statewide non-partisan, advocacy organization whose mission is to promote sound public policy and best practices to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in Maine.

We know that early experiences shape the architecture of the developing brain. We also know that 70% of children under 6 in Maine live in households where all adults are working.<sup>1</sup> That's why investing in quality early care and education so that it is accessible and affordable for all families in Maine is essential to a healthy economy. It is our responsibility as adults to foster the healthy development of children. Maine's early childhood programs exist to provide children with the essential stable, nurturing relationships and experiences that build strong foundations for their growth.

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<sup>1</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, Children under age 6 with all available parents in work force (5-yr averages) in Maine, retrieved from: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/7317-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-work-force-detailed?loc=21&locr=2#detailed/2/any/false/2545,1095,2048,574,1729,37,871,870,573,869/any/14380,14381>

Primary to all early childhood programming is our children's health and safety. The most significant source of funding to support child care in the United States is provided by the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The block grant delivers funding to the states to provide income eligible families with financial assistance for child care while also supporting the health and safety of child care for all children through licensing. The reauthorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant in 2014, the first reauthorization in 18 years, brought significant changes to child care across the country. This update to the law, which received strong bipartisan support, resulted in the need for states to improve licensing and monitoring of child care.

Young children require responsive, consistent interaction with caregivers. Infants, need one on one give and take to help ensure their emotional and cognitive development.<sup>2</sup> A single provider cannot provide these interactions if they are caring for too many children.

Most importantly, children need to be safe. State licensing and ratios are in place to protect the health and safety of children. We are concerned that the potential number of children that a single provider could be caring for under the provisions of the proposed bill could be unsafe. There is no consideration for the number of children that are already residing in the home. We are also concerned that the age of the children is not a consideration under this proposal.

We understand that families need access to more child care. Unfortunately, compromising around issues of health and safety isn't the way to grow the child care sector. The number one concern for parents, whether they live in Aroostook or York county, whether they live in a small rural community, or the city of Portland, is their child's safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>2</sup> Center on the Developing Child (2007). *The Science of Early Childhood Development* (InBrief). Retrieved from [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu).