



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

March 14, 2025

**Maine State Legislature
Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333**

**Senator Henry Ingwersen, Senate Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, House Chair**

**Remarks of
Melissa J. Willette
New England Region Liaison
United States Department of Defense-State Liaison Office**

**LD 388 – An Act to Provide Access to Quality Family Child Care for Military Personnel by
Exempting Certain Military Child Care Providers from State Licensing Requirements**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee, the Department of Defense thanks you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the policies reflected in LD 388. The proposed approach would assist with meeting the demands of military communities for family childcare services, by exempting DoD certified Family Child Care providers from duplicative licensing requirements.

My name is Melissa Willette and I am the New England Region Liaison at the Defense-State Liaison Office, operating under the direction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. We work with state leaders across the country on policies that are negatively impacting our service members and their families.

The Department established the Family Child Care (FCC) program to expand child care availability and to assist in meeting the diverse needs of military families. FCC providers offer military families reliable and personalized care in a homelike setting on and off installations. Military service members relocate to new duty stations every few years, and the Department recognizes the importance of providing military families with access to quality, affordable child development programs, and is committed to meeting the increased demand for child care across the nation.

FCC providers are certified via the military departments and are the largest contributor to the military services' ability to deliver 24-hour and emergency child care needs.

Once certified, FCC providers must complete annual training and a competency based professional development program. When moving with their service member, FCC providers do not have to complete additional training or another background check when they arrive at their new installation, unless their certification is due for renewal.

The FCC program is designed to ensure the highest standards of quality and safety are met in family child care homes. The certification process is widely recognized as one of the most stringent in the country.¹ Standards set by the Department and the military services ensure strict oversight of service providers, to include background checks, monthly inspections, and unannounced visits. Monitoring of FCC providers is conducted on a regular basis, during all hours of operation, and providers are required to maintain information as it relates to their background checks, inspections, insurance, training records, and visitation logs.

By exempting FCC providers from licensure and registration that is duplicative of the certification they receive from the military services, states such as Maine have the opportunity to enhance the stability and economic security of both the providers and military families seeking qualified child care options. If permitted by their service's regulations, under LD 388, this approach would allow them to work immediately after being certified, inspected and approved by the new installation commander, to provide care to the children of military families, pursuant to Department of Defense Instruction 6060.02.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss this policy and are especially grateful for the bipartisan bill sponsorship from Senators Stewart, Hickman and Moore; as well as Representatives Farrin and Timberlake.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,



Melissa J. Willette
New England Region Liaison
(CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
Defense-State Liaison Office

¹ GAO-23-105518, "Military Child Care: DOD Efforts to Provide Affordable, Quality Care for Families," *Government Accountability Office*, February 2, 2023, <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-105518>.

Requirement	ME/2015 License	DoD License
License Renewal	Annually	Annually
Application Fee	\$160 – full license; \$80 – provisional; \$10 – temporary; \$10 – revised license	No cost
Background Check	Provider, Staff Members, Household members over 18	Provider, Staff Members, Household members over 18. Checks include: FBI criminal history background check, and State Criminal History Records checks through State repositories of all States that a FCC provider lists as current and former residences; Installation Records Check; Installation Law Enforcement Check, drug and alcohol records check; and a check of the FAP records.
Minimum Liability Insurance	\$100,000 per person and \$300,000 for bodily injury	\$500,000
Training	6 hours of pre-licensing training Orientation Training Annual Training CPR	40 hours Orientation CPR 24 hours annually
Home Visits	Upon application; annually; or to investigate a complaint	Monthly (Unannounced)
Inspections	Initial Health & Safety, Water, Lead, Fire	Annual Safety, Health, Fire, Water and Multi-discipline team inspection (all unannounced) - i.e. lead, radon, formaldehyde, asbestos, in accordance with State requirements.
Number of Children Allowed	4 children if they are 6 weeks to 2 years of age 8 children if they are 2-5 years old 12 children if they are school aged	6 children if 2 of the children are under 2 years of age 8 children if all are school-aged (6-12)
Pets	Yes	No
USDA Food Program	Yes	Yes
Lending Library	Unknown	Free use of DoD supplies and equipment



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FAQs for LD 388

Question: Do the DOD standards for Child Care include all of the federal Child Care Development Block Grant requirements?

Answer: Yes, the standards for block grants are met; Maine also has a QRIS so the DoD FCCs would follow the QRIS requirements. "Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) – Rising Stars for ME" - Child care providers earn a rating when they meet quality standards. These ratings can help families choose quality care and can assist child care providers to improve and communicate their quality.

Question: The State of Maine has town codes directly pertaining to childcare facilities/homes. Would DoD licensed FCCs be exempt from those codes?

Answer: No, the DoD FCC provider would follow the regulation that is more stringent for the program/facility only for the FCC providers living off the installation. Providers living on the installation follow the DoD Standards.

Question: DODI 6060.02 states that "clean, sanitary drinking water is readily available". Is there a standard for what clean or sanitary means?

Answer: While the DoDI does not provide a detailed description of the drinking water requirements, our Child and Youth Program Health and Sanitation Comprehensive Inspection states: "Water may be from a drinking fountain or obtained from kitchen (food prep) sinks and served in cups from a pitcher/dispenser. Water is available: during outdoor play; during meals/snacks when other beverages are served; during sports and instructional programs. Water containers are clean. Water may not be obtained from hand washing sinks. Cold water faucets are flushed 30-60 seconds each morning before using water for drinking. Hot tap water is not used for drinking."