

Testimony in favor of LD 1294

April Tardiff

8 April 2025

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable committee members,

My name is April Tardiff. I live in Old Orchard Beach, and I'm here today to speak in strong support of LD 1294—expanding Maine's Dependent Exemption Tax Credit for children under six in families with low to moderate incomes.

In 2022, Maine's child poverty rate was 12.4%. That means around 25,000 children were living in poverty. And 34% of children—more than 82,000—lived in ALICE households: families that are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, but Employed. These families, like mine, are working hard but still struggling to make ends meet. And things have only gotten harder since 2022.

My family falls into that ALICE category. We're a household of three, earning under \$50,000 a year. After paying for groceries, diapers, rent, transportation, and utilities, there's nothing left. Some months, we're just holding on until the next paycheck arrives. The child tax credit helps us catch up—on bills, on breathing room, on life. It lets us stop worrying for just a moment.

LD 1294 would make a real difference for families like mine. Expanding the Dependent Exemption Tax Credit would mean a little less stress, a little more stability—and more time and energy focused on raising healthy, happy kids.

I respectfully urge you to vote 'Ought to Pass' on LD 1294. Let's give Maine families a little more room to breathe.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.