

Testimony of Gary Violette
Area Director, Auburn / Lewiston Clubhouses
Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine
in support of
**LD 1389: An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through
Out-of-School Time Program**
April 8, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Gary Violette and I'm the Area Director of the Auburn / Lewiston Clubhouses of Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine. I strongly support LD 1389: *An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time Program*. This initiative is a crucial investment in our children's future, providing them with safe, enriching, and structured environments beyond school hours.

Boys and Girls Clubs have long been a beacon of opportunity for youth regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. We offer high-quality out-of-school programming including academic enrichment, recreational activities and positive adult relationships that help shape well-rounded, confident, and successful young individuals.

We offer transformative programs that foster learning, creativity, and personal development. Through **Brain Gain**, children engage in hands-on academic enrichment to prevent learning loss. **Virtual Reality** programs provide immersive experiences that expand their knowledge of science, technology, and the world around them. The **Michael Phelps learn to swim** program equips members with essential water safety skills, building confidence and saving lives. Creative outlets like the sewing club and cooking club teach patience and artisanship and life skills, while yoga promotes mindfulness and emotional well-being.

By funding and expanding these critical resources, we are strengthening our communities by keeping kids engaged, inspired, and on a path to success. I urge policymakers to pass this act and invest in a brighter future for our youth.