



Teresa S. Pierce
Senator, District 25
Senate Majority Leader

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

6 Waites Landing Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

***Testimony of Senate Majority Leader Teresa S. Pierce introducing
LD 1421, An Act to Clarify Parental Notifications Regarding Child Care Facility Investigations
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
April 8, 2025***

Chair Ingwersen, Chair Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Teresa S. Pierce. I serve as the Senate Majority Leader, representing Senate District 25, which includes Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth (majority), Gray, and Long Island. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce LD 1421, An Act to Clarify Parental Notifications Regarding Child Care Facility Investigations.

So many families, providers, and businesses are dealing with the effects of child care not being accessible and affordable enough across our state – and the nation.

In Maine, the vast majority of child care providers work hard and care deeply about giving kids a safe and positive experience - they do so everyday, giving parents and guardians trust in the places they choose to drop their kids off everyday to keep them safe and nurtured.

But when that trust is questioned and under investigation, we want to make sure the state is doing what we can to increase accountability between parents and providers. Parents should be able to make informed decisions about where to send their children. We should be able to strike a balance between the **protection of children and the responsibility to adhere to investigations that might be underway.**

Last year, I learned from parents in my district that the facility they entrusted with the care of their child was under investigation by DHHS and they were made aware of it via word of mouth. The daycare under investigation was alleged to have given melatonin gummies to the children without parental consent.

This is an isolated incident and is not cause for panic. Current law already makes the administration of medication without parental permission a violation of licensure requirements. DHHS has remained engaged in this matter with the safety of children at the heart of this investigation.

The allegations are certainly concerning, as is the fact that the parents were not officially notified of the investigation.

While some parents reported the melatonin incident to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services in August 2024, the results of the investigation were not made public until



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December 2024. In the intervening five or so months, there was seemingly no official notification about the investigation sent to other parents of children at the daycare.

Parents had to find out through word of mouth that the facility they were sending their children to was under investigation. The bill before you would ensure that, regardless of the outcome of an investigation, parents would have been made aware of official investigations by the State. Currently, Title 22 subsection 7703 only states it **may** be shared.

After further consultation with the group of affected parents, I offer the following as amendment language for your consideration: "The child care center must issue an email or written communication to the parent or guardian when an investigation is opened and that the center's DHHS state licensor is also copied." This is an important addendum to ensure greater clarity and accountability between parents, child care centers and the DHHS licensor.

Again, this type of investigation is rare in Maine -almost all child care facilities are giving amazing care to our children and providing a critical service to parents and the State of Maine, but when something rare happens, let us make sure we are protecting kids and giving parents appropriate and accurate information.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill to this committee and am grateful to the parents for bringing this issue to my attention. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.