



**TESTIMONY BY KIM RUSSELL  
STATE DIRECTOR, READYNATION  
TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
THURSDAY, May 15, 2025, 10 A.M.  
IN SUPPORT OF  
LD 1736 AN ACT TO INCREASE THE SUPPORT OF CHILD CARE SERVICES THROUGH  
THE USE OF CONTRACTS**

Chairs Ingwersen, and Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Kim Russell, State Director of ReadyNation. ReadyNation is a business leader organization dedicated to building a skilled workforce and strong economy by promoting evidence-based policy solutions that prepare children to succeed in education, work, and life. Since August 2024 we have been operating under Educate Maine.

I am testifying in support of **LD 1736 AN ACT TO INCREASE THE SUPPORT OF CHILD CARE SERVICES THROUGH THE USE OF CONTRACTS**

Much of today's testimonies on all the child care proposals before you share what a vital role child care plays for Maine families and their places of work. This particular bill before you now helps Maine stabilize the child care workforce and the predictability of payments for child care programs from OCFS by establishing contracts between the state and providers.

LD 1736 would put into Maine statute the new federal requirement that OCFS enters into contracts with child care providers to ensure continuity in care.

Contract-based funding offers predictability for providers as they operate on the slimmest of margins to make their monthly budgets. Contracts would also help ensures consistent availability of slots for priority population, like infants and toddlers who are the most expensive and hardest-to-place age group in child care settings, and require higher staff-to-child ratios. Contracts could be used to help address the dire shortage of child care availability in current child care deserts.

Contracts are a helpful tool to ensure the economic stability of child care programs. This bill is a strategic investment in supply-building and service stability, particularly in rural and low-income communities. I hope it earns your support.