



Cameron Reny  
Senator, District 13

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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*Testimony of Sen. Cameron Reny introducing*  
**LD 1736, "An Act to Increase the Supply of Child Care Services Through the Use of Contracts"**

*before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*  
Thursday, May 15, 2025

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Senator Cameron Reny. I represent Senate District 13, which includes most of Lincoln County and the towns of Washington and Windsor. I am here today to introduce LD 1736, "An Act to Increase the Supply of Child Care Services Through the Use of Contracts."

I want to thank the members of this committee for your time and commitment to improve child care in Maine. As a mother of two young children and a school counselor, I understand on a daily basis the vital role that child care plays in the lives of Maine families and to our economy.

Access to affordable child care supports children's healthy development, ensures parents can go to work or school, and helps businesses and our economy thrive. Unfortunately, too many Maine families are struggling to find the affordable, reliable, quality child care they depend on.

We know that finding child care for infants or children with disabilities is particularly difficult for parents. Because there are higher operational costs per child, a need for specialized professional development, or unique physical space requirements, the cost of providing child care to these populations can be more expensive. As a consequence, there is less availability of care for certain populations of children.

The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary source of federal funding to support the child care needs of working families. Maine receives over \$33 million dollars in federal funds to support child care through the state's Child Care Affordability Program which is administered by the Office of Child and Family Services at DHHS. Currently, a family locates a child care program that accepts the Child Care Affordability Program and completes an application for the program. Child Care providers are paid by the Office of Child and Family Services based on the age of the child and whether the child attends full-time or part-time.

As an alternative to this system, the federal Office of Child Care has been encouraging states to utilize additional methods to work with child care providers and increase the availability of care, such as utilizing contracts. By utilizing an annual contract for a particular number of child care slots and ensuring steady funding to child care centers, states can increase the supply of child care for certain populations of children. In particular, recent federal rules now require states to utilize contracts or

grants to increase the supply of child care for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children in underserved geographic areas.

The bill I am presenting to you today does just that. It authorizes the Office of Child and Family Services to enter into contracts directly with childcare providers to increase the number of slots available to these groups of children.

By utilizing contracts with early childhood educators that take these higher costs into consideration, Maine can increase the supply of care for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, or children living in underserved areas. Contracts provide stability for child care centers and family child care homes so they can plan to meet the needs of children.

Studies have also found that contracts can lead to more stable enrollment for infant and toddler in child care programs. When utilized in a program in Pennsylvania, providers were better able to hire and retain qualified staff and experience better coordination between the state and local child care providers.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to ensuring stability for child care educators, the use of contracts can greatly improve the child care experience for children. When babies and toddlers are in non-parental care, they must form a secure attachment to their caregiver in order to flourish. In order to form these critical attachments, child care providers should remain stable over time. Researchers agree that having one primary caregiver for more than a year, and optimally from entry into child care until the child is at least 3 years of age, is critical for an infant's emotional development.<sup>2</sup> Children who experience too many changes in caregivers can experience a reluctance to form new relationships. Utilizing contracts can provide the continuity of care necessary for children to thrive.

LD 1736 can increase the supply of child care in Maine by providing child care centers and family child care homes with stable funding. In particular, the legislation would ensure that slots are created for infant and toddlers, children with disabilities, and allow the Department to contract to support other populations, such as homeless children or children in the child welfare system, as needed. Most importantly, the bill would help to provide a more stable workforce, something that is critical for child development, and stable options for working parents to know their kids will be cared for, allowing them to participate fully in the workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,



**Cameron Reny**

State Senator, District 13

*Representing Lincoln County and the towns of Washington and Windsor*

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<sup>1</sup> Dorn, C. (August 2020). *Infant and Toddler Contracted Slots Pilot Program: Evaluation Report*. Pennsylvania Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning. [https://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IT-Pilot-Evaluation-Report\\_PA\\_Final.V2.pdf](https://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/IT-Pilot-Evaluation-Report_PA_Final.V2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Seizing the potential: *Quality infant-toddler child care*. Authors: Cohen, Julie, Lurie-Hurvitz, Erica. February 2009. Washington, DC: Zero to Three, Policy Center. Retrieved from: <https://www.zerotothree.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Child-Care.pdf>