



## Testimony in Support of LD 1414 and LD 2066

### Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good afternoon Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyers, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Charlotte Jacobs, and I am a parent, child care provider, community organizer. I am here today on behalf of Maine People's Alliance and its more than 32,000 members, an organization committed to creating a world where everyone has what they need, contributes what they can, and no one is left behind.

I am testifying in strong support of LD 1414 and LD 2066, two bills that must move forward together if Maine is serious about stabilizing and rebuilding its child care system.

I have worked in Maine's early childhood field since 2011. Entering the workforce as a young mother, I explored various options and found the only financially sustainable path was working at a child care center where my child attended, while receiving a discounted tuition. To put this in context: in 2011, even with a **50% discount**, I paid **\$92.50 per week** for care for my 18-month-old, and that was for **four days a week, not five**, because dropping a day was a way to save a little money. Families and educators are still making these same calculations today, but costs have grown far faster than wages or supports. That's why programs are unstable, waitlists are long, and workforce supports like LD 1414 and LD 2066 matter.

Even in Gorham, where many families earn middle to upper incomes, the cost of full-time child care is a serious challenge. Since the CCAP expansion, families who would not normally qualify for assistance are finding that, without support, paying for child care is nearly impossible. Child care is now a financial burden for families across all income levels.

Between the two locations of our centers, out of **40 staff members with children**, only **two have been able to access CCEAP**. Waitlists for these programs demonstrate the high need and limited reach of support for educators who are caring for Maine's children every day. Over the past year, after the strike and in light of recent budget discussions, educators and programs have continued to experience uncertainty about what support is actually reaching the field. The level of support reaching the field simply does not match the scale of need.

LD 1414 directly addresses this workforce crisis. By providing additional salary supplements — particularly for educators caring for infants and toddlers — LD 1414 helps make child care a financially viable profession. These supports help programs hire and retain experienced educators, reduce turnover, and stabilize classrooms.



LD 2066 depends on this workforce stability to succeed. Expanding access to child care only works if programs have the staff to open classrooms. Across Maine, centers are experiencing starkly low enrollment, not because families do not need care, but because families cannot afford it without support and programs cannot afford to operate at below capacity. Investments that strengthen CCAP eligibility and reimbursement, bolster administrative supports, and include dedicated funding — such as the proposed **\$15 million investment** — are essential to reversing this trend.

Maine needs to catch up with historic investments in child care. Right now, we are falling far behind other states in funding levels, while states across the country are making history with transformative investments that expand access for all families. If Maine wants a child care system that works for educators, children, and families alike, we cannot keep falling behind — we must act now.

Together, LD 1414 and LD 2066 support Maine's child care system by ensuring that when funding flows to families and programs, there is a qualified, stable workforce ready to deliver care. These bills work in tandem to:

- **Help recruit and retain experienced child care educators** by making the profession financially viable
- **Support program stability** by reducing staff turnover and burnout
- **Stabilize enrollment** by ensuring families can afford care and programs can operate at full capacity

LD 1414 and LD 2066 move Maine toward a stable, functional child care system — one that recognizes child care as essential infrastructure, supports working families, and values the professionals who make it possible.

I urge this committee to support both bills and to continue investing in solutions that allow child care professionals to remain in the field while ensuring families can access affordable, high-quality care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Charlotte Jacobs  
Parent, Child Care Professional & Community Organizer  
Scarborough