

**Testimony in Support of LD 1414**

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

**Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee**

**1/21/2026**

My name is **April Tardiff**, and I live in **Old Orchard Beach, Maine**. I'm here today as a working parent, a community advocate, and a Maine State Parent Ambassador to speak in support of **LD 1414** and why it matters not just to families—but to Maine's workforce and economy.

Right now, too many families are falling through a gap in our child care system: the lack of care during evenings, weekends, and non-traditional work hours.

Since becoming a parent, I have struggled to find available, quality child care—especially care that meets my son's needs. He is a wonderful, complex child who has needed extra supports since he was very young. Traditional child care settings were not successful for him, and finding appropriate care has already been challenging.

When you add work schedules outside of a typical 9-to-5—after 5 p.m., on Fridays, or on weekends—it becomes nearly impossible.

In our household, we plan our work schedules weeks in advance. I spend hours calling providers, coordinating care, rearranging shifts, and asking for help just to make sure my husband and I can meet our job requirements. Most of our vacation and sick time isn't used for rest—it's used to cover child care gaps when care simply doesn't exist.

There have been many times when my husband has had to take unpaid time off work so that I could do mine. Not because we wanted to—but because there was no safe, appropriate option for our child.

This is not just a family issue—it is a workforce issue.

Maine depends on workers in health care, hospitality, manufacturing, and service industries—jobs that require evenings, weekends, and early mornings. When child care doesn't match work schedules, parents are forced to reduce hours, turn down opportunities, or leave the workforce entirely.

**LD 1414 addresses this reality.** By strengthening child care rates and supporting planning for non-traditional hour care, this bill helps stabilize both families and the workforce. It gives providers the ability to explore flexible hours in a sustainable way and helps parents stay employed, reliable, and financially stable.

When child care works, families can work.

When families can work, Maine's economy is stronger.

LD 1414 is a smart, practical step toward aligning child care with the real lives of Maine families.

I urge you to support it.

Thank you.