

January 21, 2026

**Most Rev. Bishop Robert P.  
Deeley, J.C.D.**  
President

**Rachel Grivois**  
Chairperson

**Stephen P. Letourneau**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Bill Hager**  
Director

RE: LD 2066  
"An Act to Establish the Child Care Employment Award"

Senator Ingwersen  
Representative Meyer.

Member of the Joint Committee on Health and Human  
Services

My name is Bill Hager, I am a resident of Wells Maine,  
and I work for Catholic Charities Maine, which operates  
two full range childcare programs in Southern Maine: St.  
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I am here to speak in Support of LD 2066 "An Act to  
Establish the Child Care Employment Award."

I would like to make the following key points:

- First, we at Catholic Charities would like to thank the Legislature for the progress made in childcare funding over the past two sessions. I can assure this committee that this legislation previously passed, particularly the Childcare Staff Stipend program, has made a significant impact for children and families in Maine. For our two programs, it has allowed us to open additional classrooms which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of families we serve.



- We would urge this legislature to continue this trend, as the work done to date is just a start on what is needed in the childcare world.
- I've been doing this for a very long time, and I can tell you from personal experience of having "been here/then" that increased public investments is the one thing that has (and will) result in increased capacity.
- Per the Specific of LD 2066, I can speak directly to the importance of this proposal. When this idea was introduced two years ago, it made a profound impact on our ability to hire and retain effective teachers for our programs.
- This, in turn, allowed us to open 4 additional classrooms, and (our programs alone) were able to nearly double our overall enrollment.
- The primary shortfalls of the original funding has been:
  - The limited amount of funding. After the initial implementation, relatively few new staff have been able to access this support.
  - The lack of coordination on the State level both delayed the implementation of this program, and has continued to be problematic.
- In closing, I would hope to leave you with just these final thoughts:
  - This is an issue of both capacity (having enough providers to meet community need) and "Quality

of Care.” As noted earlier today, the return on investment when we support these very young children and their families is profound.

- These returns are only achieved when the programs caring for these young children can reflect a certain level of “quality.”
- You only achieve this required level of quality, the resulting positive results, when you can recruit and maintain good staff people.
- This legislation will allow Maine to do just that.

I would be happy to provide any additional information and/or clarification.

Sincerely,

Bill Hager