

## Testimony on LD 2017

January 24, 2024

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Laurie Davis and I live in Greenville, Maine, located in Piscataquis County. I am the treasurer of the Board of Directors of Little Schoolhouse Childcare Center, the only licensed childcare center in the Greenville region. I am testifying in support of LD 2017, An Act Regarding Department of Education Reliance on Criminal Background Checks Required by the Department of Health and Human Services.

This bill is a good first step but it only addresses half the problem as it does not require full reciprocity between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services in the acceptance of fingerprinting and background checks despite the fact that across the state many people work and volunteer in both education and childcare settings at the same time. Right now, those people are required to have two separate sets fingerprints and two background checks performed.

In Greenville, Little Schoolhouse Childcare offers afterschool childcare at the Greenville School but cannot hire an ed tech or teacher who have had their fingerprints and background check done for the Department of Education, to work in our afterschool program – often with the same children- without requiring they obtain another fingerprinting and background check that will be acceptable for the Department of Health and Human Services. This places an unnecessary and unfair burden on people who work and volunteer with young children and may need to be employed in both education and childcare at the same time to make their living.

Greenville is the process of building a new building to house a 72 child center, Greenville's pre-K classrooms for 4 and 3 year olds, and the Greenville Recreation Department. This new building will be located on the school grounds next to the Greenville School that serves grades K-12. As the law stands at present the pre-K and childcare staff working in this building, sharing space and the care of and education of young children throughout the day will be required to be fingerprinted twice, once for the Dept. of Education and once for the Dept. Of Health and Human Services. This does not make sense and is burdensome.

I also want to talk about the very real burden placed on rural Mainers to be fingerprinted. Greenville is located 70 miles and 1 hour and forty-five minutes each way from Bangor where the nearest IdentoGo is located. This trip will take at least four hours including driving and fingerprinting time and cost \$93.80 based on 140 miles at the IRS mileage rate of \$0.67/mile plus \$55 for fingerprinting for a total of \$148.80. Getting fingerprinted is not a quick and easy task for rural Mainers. To get this done twice takes 8 hours and is expensive, with the cost rising to \$297.60.

I would urge you to pass this bill, but also perhaps revise it to fully also address the problem of reciprocity between Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health and Human Services fully so that people who work and volunteer educating and caring for Maine's young children are able to work and volunteer in both education and childcare at the same time with having to be fingerprinted twice.

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