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Testimony of
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Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

LD 533 – An Act To Expand the Statewide Voluntary Early Childhood Consultation Program

Hearing Date: April 2, 2021

Good Morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Todd Landry, Director of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) within the Department of Health and Human Services and I am here today to provide information regarding LD 533, An Act To Expand the Statewide Voluntary Early Childhood Consultation Program. This bill would provide additional funding to expand the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (known as ECCP).

The Legislature previously approved and funded an ECCP pilot with 5 sites. Since receiving this funding OCFS has made significant progress in implementing Maine's ECCP, including hiring a Project Manager, collaborating with stakeholders to study and select an ECCP model, and implementing the selected model within Maine. The Connecticut ECCP model was selected based on the strong evidence supporting its effectiveness. OCFS has also procured providers for each of the five pilot sites and retained the services of an independent evaluator to study the effectiveness of the program in the pilot sites. Earlier this year training for the ECCP consultants was completed and they have been providing services for the past few months.

Although ECCP has only been underway for a few months OCFS is already receiving positive feedback from providers, including the effectiveness of training targeted to the needs of early childhood staff and the particular children in their care. To quote one provider, "I have noticed the team reacting differently and making meaning of behaviors rather than just feeling overwhelmed. There is a sense of confidence in themselves and one another that has increased."

In order to ensure a robust sample and comprehensive evaluation of Maine's ECCP, OCFS is planning to use federal funding from the Federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) to expand the pilot and evaluation to three additional sites. With an 8 site evaluation, OCFS believes the final evaluation will be of significant value in considering further expansion of ECCP.

OCFS understands that the sponsor has requested that this bill be tabled and carried over to the next session and we would support this decision to provide time to complete the CRRSA-funded expansion and ongoing evaluation.

We wanted to make you aware of this information as you consider this proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.