

Testimony of Rosalyn C. Fisher

Before the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee, in support of LD 1652: An Act to Build a Child Care System by Recruiting and Retaining Maine's Early Childhood Educators Workforce.

May 11, 2021

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Rosalyn C. Fisher. I am a resident of Bangor and I am writing to testify in favor of LD 1652.

House Speaker Fecteau's bill, LD1652, recognizes the need to have ongoing investment in a strong child care workforce to increase access to high quality child care for working families. The pandemic exacerbated the problems of finding high quality childcare. Both childcare centers and family child cares have difficulty in hiring and retaining early educators who work long hours and are paid low wages, usually without benefits. Even salaries for early childhood teachers with Bachelor's degrees are lower than those of teachers in public schools.

As an occupational therapist, I worked for 11 years for Infant Parent Early Intervention Program in Austin, TX, with children who had delays or disabilities. I saw children in family child care programs, child care centers, and preschools, as well as in their homes. Children benefitted from the early learning support and consistent care of providers who helped them to learn skills that would make them as independent as possible. Parents could go to work knowing that their children would gain social emotional skills with other children and adults.

I urge you to vote for LD 1652 to address urgent needs and to build a child care system by investing in Maine's early childhood workforce.

Rosalyn C. Fisher

Retired Occupational Therapist