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Testimony of Meg Helming
before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee in support of
L.D. 948 "An Act To Support Boys and Girls Clubs through Lottery Revenue"

April 2, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Meg Helming and I am the Director of Advocacy & Impact for the YMCA Alliance of Maine, which represents the 16 YMCAs in our state. The YMCA Alliance supports L.D. 948 "An Act To Support Boys and Girls Clubs through Lottery Revenue" – ***with the request to also include the YMCAs as beneficiaries of this lottery game.***

The 16 YMCAs in Maine serve 130,000 – or 1 in 10 – Mainers each year. We provide essential services in our communities to some of Maine's most vulnerable residents. At the Y, these services include childcare, hunger relief, housing, and community-based chronic disease prevention programs. We are the largest childcare provider in the state. Throughout the last year, we have innovated to meet community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, even as our organizations have been under incredible stress to manage closures, increased operating costs, and capacity restrictions. In 2020 alone, we served 17,000 children in childcare, camp, before/afterschool and remote learning support programs; distributed 219,000 meals in our communities; and provided virtual programming for 71,000 people.

The YMCAs are charitable organizations that provide essential services in our communities across the state. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to receive funds from this lottery game that we can put toward our mission in service to Maine families. We thank you for your consideration.

About the YMCA Alliance of Maine

The Alliance supports collaboration amongst the state's Ys and community partners to increase our impact and advocate for positive change in our communities. The 16 YMCAs in Maine are:

Auburn-Lewiston YMCA • Bangor Region YMCA • Bath Area Family YMCA • Boothbay Region YMCA • Central Lincoln County YMCA • Down East Family YMCA • Kennebec Valley YMCA • Mount Desert Island YMCA • Old Town-Orono YMCA • Penobscot Bay YMCA • Piscataquis Regional YMCA • Sanford-Springvale YMCA • State YMCA of Maine • Waldo County YMCA • YMCA of Greater Waterville • YMCA of Southern Maine

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