

**The Maine Heritage Policy Center
Testimony to Oppose LD 1760
"An Act To Support Children's Healthy Development and School
Readiness"**

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson and distinguished members of the Committee Health and Human Services, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in opposition to LD 1760.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center is opposed to this legislation because it establishes the First 4 ME Early Care and Education Program without a funding mechanism aside from directing the Department of Health and Human Services to "prioritize funding" to the project. While the intent of this legislation is noble, our main concern is how much this program would cost taxpayers in the state of Maine and if it would be effective in achieving its stated goal -- to provide comprehensive, high-quality early child care and education for at-risk children under the age of six who have not entered kindergarten.

This legislation would allow a 12 member community coalition to form and sponsor a project and assist and support a nonprofit community contractor in submitting an application that includes a 3-year budget. While this bill is limited to helping at-risk children, it does not specify a maximum budget for a community contractor, the community coalition and community provider to carry out their action plan and the project itself. Thus, The Maine Heritage Policy Center is concerned that these projects would be costly to taxpayers.

Further, this bill would grow the size and scope of government services by creating an entirely new program with the purpose of funding community projects. To be clear, The Maine Heritage Policy Center is not opposed to helping at-risk children in the state; the method of doing so merely needs to be financially sound and non-duplicative. This criteria is not met in this bill.

For those reasons, The Maine Heritage Policy Center urges the committee to vote, "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 1760. Thank you.