

**The Maine Heritage Policy Center
Testimony to Oppose LD 238
“An Act To Increase the Minimum Area of Usable
Space per Child Required in the Outdoor Area of a
Child Care Center”**

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and distinguished members of the Committee On Health and Human Services, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as the policy analyst for The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding LD 238, “An Act To Increase the Minimum Area of Usable Space per Child Required in the Outdoor Area of a Child Care Center.”

To start, it is important to recognize the intent of this bill is to increase the quality of child care in Maine and that is commendable. However, the unintended consequences of this bill would outweigh any positive results it may have. The Maine Heritage Policy Center firmly believes this bill will further stifle the child care industry by putting unnecessary regulations and adding red tape on top of what is already required. The number of child care facilities could decline due to the inability to adhere to this new regulation. To that end, this bill could contribute to the rising cost of child care in Maine due to a potential drop in supply and subsequently increase in demand.

Mandating that child care centers have a minimum of 45 square feet of outdoor space per child could prove to be detrimental to the child care industry in this state. The price of child care is already very high for consumers and this bill would only exacerbate the problem. The Mercatus Center, a reputable non-profit organization, found that the regulation of child care facilities is associated with the increasing cost of child care. While they did not specifically measure square footage requirements in the report, it is important to note that regulations in general have an impact on the cost of child care.¹ When there is already a shortage of child care services for consumers, it would be a mistake to create another hurdle for providers in the industry to jump through.

In addition, regulations disproportionately affect the poor and working class. When the cost of care goes up, it is often the people who make the least who are affected the most. After all, the average annual cost of child care to the consumer was \$9,512 in Maine as of 2016.² Imagine trying to pay this every year on top of all of your living expenses and on a fixed income. We believe the solution to this problem is to reasonably deregulate the child care industry to facilitate growth of this service while also keeping the health and welfare of the children in mind.

In closing, due to the potential for a price increase for child care, the likelihood of another regulation pushing more child care facilities out of the state, and the overall growth of government; The Maine

¹ <https://www.mercatus.org/system/files/Thomas-Regulation-Child-Care.pdf>

² <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/06/how-much-child-care-costs-in-every-state-in-america.html>

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THE MAINE HERITAGE POLICY CENTER

Heritage Policy Center would like to urge the committee to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on this bill. Thank you.