

## **LD 187 An Act to Increase Access to Child Care and Early Education for Maine's Working Families**

**Bill sponsor: Rep. Anne Rand**  
**Referred to: Appropriations and Financial Affairs**  
**Committee vote: ONTP**

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### **SUMMARY**

LD 187 proposed to make ongoing General Fund appropriations and allocations to the Office of Child Care and Head Start within the Department of Health and Human Services. The bill proposed 4 areas for increased funding:

1. **Child Care Subsidies.** \$3 Million annually to fund an increase in monies available for the child care subsidy program.

*Supporters stated that funding has not kept pace with the increased cost in child care since 2002 and that this increase would keep the child care investment where it was in 2002.*

2. **Subsidies for Infant/Toddler Quality care.** \$1.5 Million annually to provide a 20% increase in funding that reimburses families who place infants and toddlers in child care programs of quality (characterized by supporters as above 75% of market rate) and to allow for a change in eligibility for this subsidy to include those that make up to 100% of the state median income.

*Supporters state that cost child care for infants and toddlers is greater than that for older children and that the cost of quality care exceeds public reimbursement rates and families ability to afford that level of care.*

3. **Subsidies for At-risk Families.** \$1 Million annually for child care funding targeted at families at risk of losing children to the custody of DHHS.

*Supporters state that families who have not yet reached point of requiring state custody demonstrate a need for child care subsidies for reasons beyond just job-training or finding/maintaining employment. These families need child care to address issues of family crisis, homelessness, mental illness, etc..)*

4. **Early Head Start.** \$1.5 Million annually to expand Head Start services for infants and toddlers meeting poverty guidelines and to provide services for an additional 20 children per region.

**Total General Fund Cost:                    \$7 Million Annually**