FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA
MAINE

July 28, 2020

Dear Governor Mills,

During these unprecedented times caused by the novel COVID-19 pandemic, we appreciate all you and your administration have done to support the needs of child care access and affordability for working parents, especially for our essential first responders. Thank you for your recent commitment of an additional $8.4 million for the child care industry from Maine's federal relief funds provided in the CARES Act.

Today we are writing to you to talk about the need to further support our child care workforce across Maine. We do so as members of the anti-crime organization Fight Crime: Invest In Kids, an organization you know from your own membership with us when you served as our Attorney General. Collectively our experience on the front lines has taught us that research-based investments in kids help prevent later crime and make our communities safer. In addition, research shows that these investments can substantially save in corrections and other law enforcement costs over time.

As the picture of our state budget, and additional federal supports, becomes more clear, we hope that you will give serious consideration to fully funding the child care recommendations from your Economic Recovery Committee.

You know well that child care is essential for children, working parents, and our economy. We know from developmental science that the early years are the time when the brain is literally building itself from the ground up, in much the way a house is constructed. It is more important than ever that children have positive experiences and relationships with caring adults. Parents need safe, high-quality child care that they can afford as they return to work. Should school districts create schedules that will result in children only being at school two or three days a week, working parents will need help arranging and paying for child care that will cover out-of-school time for their school-aged children.

Historically, child care providers are dependent upon tuition from parents and receive little government support. As parents have kept their children home, most providers are facing unprecedented financial losses. Many have been struggling to maintain and pay their staff while continuing to pay monthly expenses such as rent and utilities. As they are reopening, they have less income because of lower group sizes (on average, OCFS is reporting child care programs are operating at 65% of capacity), yet higher costs due to their need for personal protective equipment, and increased cleaning supplies.

Without additional financial support from the state and Congress, many providers will be unable to sustain these compounding operating losses. Working families, especially our first responders, and Maine's economy, cannot afford to lose these providers. We need to support them now so they will still be here when the COVID-19 crisis ends.

Please consider fully funding you Economic Recovery Committee's recommendations to **provide $20 million to support child care providers for our youngest children and $25**

million to support child care for school-age children so that they can safely return to school and their parents to work.

We also hope this unique situation in which many school districts may opt for a model other than full-time school "as normal" will create more partnerships between public schools and child care providers, and that your Administration will encourage and incentivize such partnerships.

We hope we can count on you to make funding stability to the fragile child care sector a continued priority.

Thank you for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,



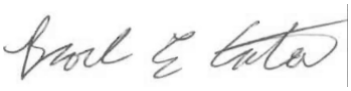
Patricia L. Arnaudin
Chief of Police
Ogunquit



Douglas Bracy
Former Chief of Police
York



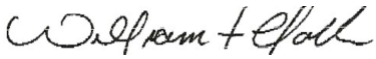
David Bucknam
Chief of Police
Skowhegan



Brock Caton
Chief of Police
University of Maine
Farmington



Richard E. Caton IV
Chief of Police
Jay



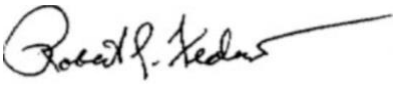
William F. Clark
Former Sheriff
Hancock County



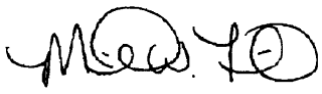
Jack Clements
Chief of Police
Saco



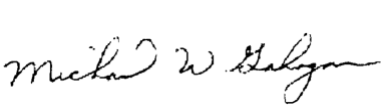
John E. Cote
Chief of Police
Maine State Police



Robert J. Federico
Chief of Police
Norway



Michael W. Field
Chief of Police
Bath



Michael W. Gahagan
Chief of Police
Caribou



Sean P. Geagan
Chief of Police
Bucksport



Kevin J. Joyce
Sheriff
Cumberland County



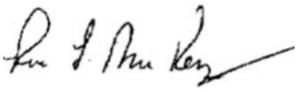
Laurie Kelly
Chief of Police
Presque Isle



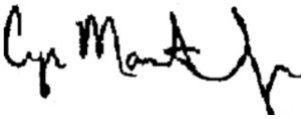
William L. King
Sheriff
York County



Roland J. LaCroix
Chief of Police
University of Maine



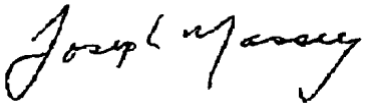
Robert F. MacKenzie
Chief of Police
Kennebunk



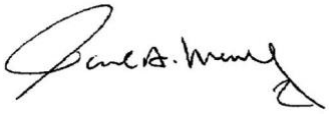
Cyr Martin Jr.
Chief of Police
Ashland



Kenneth Mason
Sheriff
Kennebec County



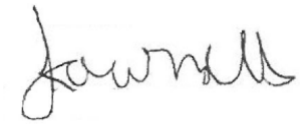
Joseph C. Massey
Chief of Police
Waterville



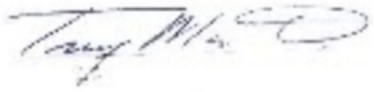
Joel A. Merry
Sheriff
Sagadahoc County



Tony Milligan
Chief of Police
Rumford



Jared Mills
Chief of Police
Augusta



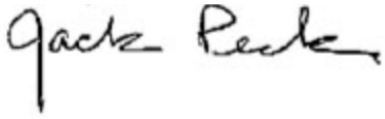
Troy Morton
Sheriff
Penobscot County
President, Maine Sheriffs Association



Susan B. Nourse
Chief of Police
Freeport



Brian O'Malley
Chief of Police
Lewiston



Jack Peck
Chief of Police, Farmington
President, Maine Chief of Police Association



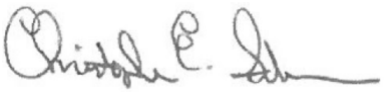
Jo-Ann Putnam
Chief of Police
Wells



Janine L. Roberts
Chief of Police
Westbrook



Eric Samson
Sheriff
Androscoggin County



Christopher Sanborn
Chief of Police
Gorham



Craig A. Sanford
Chief of Police
Kennebunkport



Kevin L. Schofield
Chief of Police
Windham



Timothy Sheehan
Chief of Police
South Portland



Edward J. Tolan
Executive Director
Maine Chief of Police Association



Michael D. Tracy
Chief of Police
Oakland



Scott Wilcox
Chief of Police
Old Town



Christopher J. Young
Chief of Police
Rockland



Robert Young
Sheriff
Piscataquis County

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Pender Makin, Commissioner, Department of Education
Todd Landy, Director, Office of Child and Family Services, Department of Health & Human Services
Dan Chuhta, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education
Ana Hicks, Senior Policy Analyst & Children's Cabinet Coordinator, Governor's Office of Innovation and the Future
Beth Beausang, Senior Policy Advisor/Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor