

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

For the record, I am Senator Denise Ricciardi, and I represent Senate District 9. I should first like to apologize for not being in front of your committee today. As may have already been relayed to you, I was already arranged to attend a policy roundtable in Washington D.C. to speak about this very legislation. While I cannot be there in person, I am submitting this written testimony and welcome any questions the committee may have during your deliberations.

The affordable childcare crisis is real, and it is getting worse. In 2025, 68 percent of childcare providers nationwide reported increases in their liability insurance premiums, which is up from 46 percent the year before. Some saw increases of 300 to 1,000 percent, according to national survey data. Here in New Hampshire, we have lost nearly 13 percent of our licensed childcare capacity since 2017. This decline is driven in part by insurance carriers exiting the market or pricing providers out of it entirely.

These numbers are not abstract. They represent real programs, real educators, and real families. Let me share one story. Last summer, the executive director of a long-standing nonprofit childcare center in New Hampshire was told her insurer would no longer cover childcare programs. She was days away from closing her doors. As a nonprofit leader, she would have been personally liable if anything went wrong. She told us, 'If you even find insurance, you're going to pay through the nose for it.' And she's right. Even providers with perfect safety records are being priced as if they are high-risk operations. They are being penalized simply for existing in a sector that insurers increasingly view as too risky to touch. This is not sustainable. This is not rational. And it is certainly not in the best interest of America's children or America's workforce.

That is why I decided to act. Senate Bill 614 is a bipartisan measure that allows childcare, foster care, and behavioral health providers to form multiple-caregiver self-insured risk coverage arrangements. In plain terms, self-insurance pools. These pools allow providers to: Share risk, purchase insurance collectively, build reserve funds, access professional risk-management services and operate under full regulatory oversight.

The bill passed the Senate with no opposition — not a single vote against it, not a single neutral witness. That level of consensus is rare, and it reflects the urgency of

the moment. SB 614 is modeled on successful frameworks in Washington State, informed by feasibility studies in Montana, and aligned with recommendations from the National Governors Association, the Bipartisan Policy Center, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Childcare is not just a family issue. It is not just an education issue. It is workforce infrastructure, as essential to our economy as roads, bridges, and broadband. If we allow the liability insurance crisis to continue unchecked, we will undermine the very foundation of our labor force. But if we act, decisively, collaboratively, and with the full weight of state leadership, we can stabilize this sector and strengthen our economy for decades to come.

As always, I am happy to work together on this issue, and I look forward to hearing from the committee on this topic.

Sincerely,

Senator Denise Ricciardi

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise Ricciardi". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

State Senate District 9