

ELIZABETH BURKE BRYANT

Testimony in support of H-7438 to establish an Early Childhood IDEA Services Task Force managed by the Children's Cabinet to develop recommendations to improve access to Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Services

Chairman McNamara and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Burke Bryant and I am a Professor of the Practice of Health Services, Policy and Practice at the Brown University School of Public Health where I am based at the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute. I am providing this testimony in my individual capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of H-7438 sponsored by Representative Carson and co-sponsored by Representatives Donovan, Giraldo, Casimiro, Shallcross Smith, Fogarty, Diaz, and Cotter that would require the establishment of an Early Childhood IDEA Services Task Force. The Task Force will develop a plan for a high quality, well-coordinated system of educational and developmental services for babies and young children with developmental delays and disabilities.

The IDEA requires that children receive Early Intervention and preschool special education services in a timely manner to address their developmental and learning delays and to set them on a path for success. Too often children and families encounter delays in accessing Early Intervention services and experience difficulty navigating smooth transitions from Early Intervention to preschool special education. The Task Force will formulate a plan to ensure a seamless early childhood system.

I urge passage of this critically important bill that will help to ensure the healthy development and educational success of Rhode Island's young children.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of Rhode Island's Children and Families.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant

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