



**March 16, 2026**

**Health and Human Services Committee**

**Rhode Island State House Providence, RI 02903**

**RE: Testimony in Support of H 7905 AN ACT RELATING TO STATE  
AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES --  
QUALITY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AND SCHOOL-AGE CHILD  
CARE THROUGH VOLUNTARY QUALITY RATING SYSTEM**

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Diana Garlington, and I serve as a Policy Program Officer at United Way of Rhode Island. I am writing to express my strong support for Housing Bill No. 7905, which establishes a voluntary quality rating system to assess and strengthen early care and education and school-age child care programs across Rhode Island.

Investing in high-quality early childhood education benefits our children, families, and communities. Research shows that kids in strong early learning programs develop stronger social, emotional, and cognitive skills that help them succeed in school and throughout life.

A voluntary quality rating system provides an important framework to help families identify programs that meet high standards of care and education. At the same time, it supports childcare providers by offering a clear pathway to improve program quality, professional development, and learning environments.

From a policy perspective, strengthening early care and education is also essential to building stable families and a strong workforce. When parents have access to trusted, high-quality childcare, they are better able to work, pursue education, and support their families. Quality childcare also helps reduce disparities for children in under-resourced communities by ensuring they have equitable access to early learning opportunities.

Through my work with United Way and community partners, I see firsthand how access to quality childcare impacts family stability, educational outcomes, and long-term economic mobility. Policies like House Bill No. 7905 help ensure that childcare programs across Rhode Island have the tools and support needed to maintain high standards while giving families transparency and confidence in the care their children receive.

By creating a voluntary quality rating system, Rhode Island can continue strengthening its early learning infrastructure while supporting both providers and families in achieving the best outcomes for children.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support passage of House Bill No. 7905.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Diana Garlington

Policy Program Officer

United Way of Rhode Island