



March 17, 2026

Subject: SEIU 1199NE Position in Support of H-7908

Dear Chairman McNamara and Honorable Members of the House Education Committee:

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, representing approximately 7,500 essential workers across Rhode Island—including healthcare, home care, and child care workers—we write in support of H-7908.

Rhode Island must do more to stabilize and grow its child care system, particularly family child care. Over the years, we have lost hundreds of family child care providers. SEIU 1199NE represents roughly 400 FCCPs today, down from over 1,000 in the past. That decline has real consequences for working families who rely on access to affordable, community-based care.

Family child care providers are small business owners, and if the state is serious about rebuilding this system, it needs to give them clear and workable options to succeed.

Right now, BrightStars can be challenging to navigate and does not always reflect the work providers have already done to improve quality. One key issue is how ratings are determined. Under the current system, a provider's overall rating can be held down by performance in a single area, even if they are meeting or exceeding standards across most other domains.

H-7908 addresses this by requiring that ratings be based on an average of all applicable standards. This provides a more accurate and balanced picture of program quality. Providers who are doing strong work across most areas should see that reflected in their rating, rather than being held back by performance in a single category. Just as importantly, a clearer and more predictable system makes it easier for providers to understand what is expected and how to move forward.

This matters because, under the current approach, providers can make meaningful improvements but still not see those gains reflected in their overall rating. We regularly hear from providers who have earned credentials like a Child Development Associate (CDA) but remain at a 1 or 2 Star level. When progress is not reflected in a provider's rating, it discourages participation and makes it harder for providers to stay in business.

This points to a broader issue: providers need clear and meaningful ways to have their work recognized within the system. One pathway does not work for everyone. Providing the option to pursue national accreditation—alongside the existing BrightStars pathway—would give small business owners another viable way to demonstrate quality, improve their programs, and earn a sustainable living.

If Rhode Island wants to rebuild its child care system, it needs to focus on making it easier—not harder—for providers to succeed. That means clear expectations, fair recognition of the work they've already done, and multiple pathways to move forward.

H-7908 moves us in that direction, and we respectfully urge the Committee to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alex" and the last name "Moore" clearly distinguishable.

Alex Moore

Political Director

SEIU 1199NE

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