

April 30, 2024  
Alishia Salerno  
Preschool Teacher  
In support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Hello, my name is Alishia Salerno and I'm an early childhood preschool teacher. I have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and have been working with children for many years. I am advocating for the early Childhood Stabilization Act ever since high school. I knew I wanted to work with children. I wanted to offer children high quality education. While meeting their individual needs. And making a difference in their lives. Working in the. Early childhood field has become difficult for me to. To low wage in an increased inflation. I believe that the low rate. Of pay has caused a staffing crisis. Therefore, the level of quality. Education has decreased the step up wage has helped retain educators and increases the long term benefits of the children's educational success as inflation. Continues to increase by hourly wage is not sufficient to meet my living expenses. The step up wage benefit has helped. Me to continue my very important work. I think state legislators need to understand the importance of early while her educators and the positive outcome of children's performance and future. We as early childhood educators need to be recognized and compensated. Often and appropriately.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Alishia Salerno