

April 30, 2024

Alysia Polion

Assistant 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.**

My name is Alysia Polion and I am an Paraprofessional and Early Childhood teacher assistant at Tri-County CAA and I am also a past parent of an early childhood program. I am advocating for the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

I am advocating for early childhood funding because teachers work extremely hard to provide a nurturing, safe, educational environment for young children and the wages we receive do not compensate nor reflect for the effort that is put in.

I chose to become an Early Childhood Educator because my son was in a program, and I thought the work they did was great in all aspects! From outreach screenings, parent guidance/ information, nutrition, social emotional development, and the supports they offered were helpful to all in need. I got my RIDE TA Certification and Preschool CDA to be in this field.

Challenges in the work field are low wages, understaffing, which creates pressure when you need to call out or are sick. Also there are a lot more children who were babies during COVID coming into programs with speech, behavior and social emotional due to being home and not being exposed to normal interactions and social surroundings.

I would like state legislators to know that the early childhood field is extremely important to our future and due to the low wages and high expectations more and more people are choosing to leave the field, for higher paying jobs at fast food chains that require no experience or training. It is statistically proven that children who have been in an early education program are more ready and prepared when they get to Kindergarten.

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,

Alysia Polion