

April 30, 2024  
Emily Franceschi  
Lead 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.**

Hi, my name is Emily Franceschi and I am one of the many early educators in Rhode Island. I am 24 years old and I work at Dr.Daycare in Cumberland RI. I am currently a student at CCRI and will be graduating in May with my associate in early education. I wanted to write this as a way to show what the Rhode Island Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act has done for me personally. I live on my own with my boyfriend and I am financially independent from my parents, they are willing to help me out when I need it, but as an adult I don't want to have to rely on my parents for assistance when it comes to bills, plus my parents don't have all sorts of money to be loaning me either. I am essentially living paycheck to paycheck, and this is causing me to experience severe stress and anxiety. The compensation act allowed me to breathe, I was able to live comfortably for a while once the WAGES check was deposited into my account because it allowed me to not have to worry about my bank account and all the bills I had. Prior to these acts being passed I was working two jobs while attending school just to make ends meet, and I am about to have to go back to doing that. I was exhausted during that period of my life and having the ability to leave that second job allowed me to put all I had into the center that I work at. I believe that early educators should be properly compensated for the work they do. I worked a 10-hour shift today, which is my daily shift, except for Thursdays at the moment due to school, with eight infants. The early years are crucial to proper development, there is research which states that birth-three is crucial to a child's overall development. We are helping form the minds of the future of this world and in my opinion that is an extremely important job. Not to mention, without childcare so many families would not be able to work and therefore would result in the economy taking a massive hit if there weren't early educators and centers where children could attend. Because of issues such as low pay, many qualified educators are steering away from the field of education because let's face it, it is not an easy field to be in and we are severely underpaid for what we do. I love my job but sometimes I wonder if I will ever have to leave this field in order to sustain a livable salary, especially when I am ready to start a family. I implore you, please do not cut these funds from early educators. These children need qualified individuals in their classrooms and without proper compensation, the number of qualified educators will eventually diminish, especially in today's economy. I encourage you to visit an early learning center and see what a day in the life of an early educator looks like.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGES 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,

Emily Franceschi