

April 30, 2024
Erin Gray
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

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.**

The supplement has helped me tremendously in achieving a livable wage in my current position. Without this supplement I was required to work a second job to take care of my basic housing needs and other cost of living expenses. I was able to benefit from the Step Up to WAGE\$ supplement but my co teacher was not offered the grant due to not having enough early childhood credits from school. She has a degree in a related field (elementary education) yet was still not able to receive funding. Without this program I would be consistently needing to work a second job to pay for my basic living needs. When looking for an apartment it was very difficult to find people who would consider me a good tenant because the cost of rent is so high, and they want to see income that is 3x the cost of rent which is almost impossible.

Emma Villa

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,

Erin Gray