



50 Valley Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02909  
(401) 444-0600 | [www.unitedwayri.org](http://www.unitedwayri.org)



April 30, 2024  
Honorable Marvin Abney, Chair  
Committee on House Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill Numbers 7251, 7336, 7497, RELATING TO EDUCATION – Rhode Island Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act; RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT – The Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning; RELATING TO EDUCATION – Rhode Island Prekindergarten Education Act**

The United Way of Rhode Island is writing to express its wholehearted support for **House Bills 7251, 7336, and 7497, the Rhode Island Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act, The Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning and the Rhode Island Prekindergarten Education Act**. These pieces of legislation address the pressing need to support our struggling childcare workforce by implementing a comprehensive system to track employment data, shedding light on the indispensable role of early educators, and evaluating early educator compensation rates. The childcare workforce plays a pivotal role in the development of our youngest learners, laying the foundation for their future success. However, this sector often faces challenges, including recruitment difficulties, retention issues, and a lack of resources. The Rhode Island Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act and the Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning, represent a significant step forward in addressing these challenges by establishing a systematic approach to monitor and support our dedicated early educators. A robust data system, as proposed by these Acts, will enable the Rhode Island Department of Human Services and the Rhode Island Department of Education to produce annual reports on the status of the registry data system and the early care and education workforce.

This transparency is vital for understanding the current state of the childcare workforce, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing targeted interventions to enhance support mechanisms. By supporting this legislation, we acknowledge the critical importance of early educators in shaping the future of our children and ensuring their well-rounded development. These Acts not only provide a mechanism to recognize and address the challenges faced by the childcare workforce but also lay the groundwork for a more resilient and effective early care and education system in Rhode Island.

The United Way of Rhode Island encourages the committee to consider the profound impact that these bills, the **Rhode Island Early Educator Stabilization Act, the Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning and the Rhode Island Prekindergarten Education Act**, can have on the lives of our children and

**Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.**





50 Valley Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02909  
(401) 444-0600 | [www.unitedwayri.org](http://www.unitedwayri.org)



the professionals dedicated to their early development. Your support for this legislation is an investment in the well-being and success of our families, youngest children and the future prosperity of our great state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for working to support Rhode Island families.

Sincerely yours,

Elijah McLean

United Way of Rhode Island

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.

