

April 30, 2024

Michelle Bowab

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.**

I have worked in the field of Early Education for over twenty years. As an educator and a parent of two children I understand how important it is for parents to have good quality programs where their children are learning at a developmentally appropriate level that meets their unique abilities. Since the pandemic I see a great deal of anxiety and lack of self help skills among our youth. It is important for these children to have stability and continuity in their growth.

It is hard for us Educators to maintain a living in this most important field with the low wages and staff shortages. Today I was at home with my child who was sick and unable to attend school. With my husband traveling for work I had no choice, but to ask for a substitute. Unfortunately due to staff shortages my classroom could not run at full capacity and the families were forced to make other arrangements.

These wages may not seem like much for many, but means a lot for us Early Educators. This allows us to put funds away for our children's educations, high living expenses, and future investments. I have loved every minute of teaching in this field, but even I have recently wondered if this will be sufficient for my future. I spend many hours at home planning, putting my own funds into my classroom, and do not get much flexibility with personal time due to lack of staffing. We celebrate, laugh, cry, and work together with many families throughout the years. In the end we want the same outcome for each child to feel like they were supported and mattered.

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.

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Sincerely,

Michelle Bowab