

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Silvia, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Dr. Day Care.

I like to teach at an early age, but it is sad to see how there is a lack of teachers who genuinely love their work and strive to give children a good education and motivation to continue learning. I tell my little ones that it is essential to learn so that they can have a promising future, be lawyers and engineers, and even become president of this country.

Well, I only received the 2023 aid, and although I have been teaching children for 10 years, I was denied the first bonus; it hurt me a lot because we strive to help daycare reopen its doors during the pandemic. This aid came at a key moment for the economy. My house that the help they are giving is unexpected but it was also unexpected the amount of taxes that I had to pay this year. For example, they deducted a thousand dollars from my refund, and it was hard

Mi nombre es Silvia y yo soy un asistente a maestro en Dr. Day Care. A mi me gusta enseñar a temprana edad pero es triste ver como hacen falta maestros que de verdad amen su trabajo esforzarse por que los niños puedan tener una buena educación y una motivación para seguir adelante con el aprendizaje yo les digo a mis chiquitos que es importante aprender para que puedan tener un buen futuro para que puedan ser abogados ingenieros y hasta pueden llegar a ser presidente de este país.

bueno yo solo recibí las ayudas del 2023 aunque tengo 10 años enseñando niños se me negó el primer bono, me dolio mucho porque nosotros nos esforzamos por ayudar al daycare a reabrir las puertas en la pandemia esas ayudas llegaron en un momento clave a la economía de mi casa.

Que la ayuda que están dando es una ayuda inesperada pero también fue inesperado la cantidad de impuestos que uno tuvo que pagar este año. Ejemplo a mi me descontaron mil dólares de mi reembolso y fue duro.

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Silvia Teacher's Assistant Dr. Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Karen Kuski, and I am an Administrator at Children's Learning Express. I have been in the field of early childhood for over 25 years. I have been at my present job for 19 years. In the past, I have gone without healthcare because I could not afford it on my salary, working in early education. With the help of the TEACH program, I returned to school and earned my bachelor's degree in 2018 at 67. My degree is in teaching pre-K through grade 2. I could quickly go into the public school system. Teachers are in demand. Doing so would also afford me the benefits of teaching in the public system. However, despite this, I have chosen to stay in the ECE field. I am very invested in this age group and with my current center. I enjoy working with this age group. I am passionate about watching children grow, develop, and become independent. I love watching the children discover the world around them.

The pandemic retention bonuses and the Wage\$ supplement were a massive help to me. I was able to take part in both of these opportunities. Early childcare centers were deemed essential during the pandemic and therefore early educators were not part of the population that received extra benefits through unemployment. My car was beginning to give me some problems. The bonus helped with a down payment. The money was also used to help me get caught up on my utility bills. Additionally, I was able to start a savings account. At Christmas time, I donated to my neighborhood's little free library. This helped to purchase books that were used as Christmas gifts for children in the area. I was also able to purchase some new things for my center.

The cost of living has increased. Food, utilities, interest paid, health care, and rent are sky-high. Most early childcare workers make minimum wage or just above. These funds helped my family and other families immensely. I do not qualify for any state assistance because my children are grown. Enrollment is low, and the owner cannot afford to pay raises at this time. I could go to McDonalds and make a higher hourly wage.

We have these little lives in our hands each day. It is a huge responsibility. I am not looking to get rich quickly; however, I would like to be able to pay my bills and be financially comfortable.

Karen Kuski Administrator Children's Learning Express

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Kristin Silva, and I am a Teacher at the Academy for Little Children - Lincoln.

I have worked in the same school for 5 years, and words can't explain how important this job is. I worked hard to get where I am right now, and I couldn't be any prouder. I just watch the children grow and learn, and enjoy knowing it is because I was their teacher and there to guide them in the right direction.

Having this extra income has honestly made me feel a lot more appreciative, and yes, money isn't everything but we teachers don't make enough when it comes to our pay rate. We do so much from creating our own curriculum and implementing the activities into our day with the kids, all while helping children who may have behavioral issues. I have always wanted to be a teacher, and now that I have the opportunity to further my career, having that extra help has also helped me stay at my job so I can pay my bills.

I understand that money doesn't grow on trees, but we, as teachers, deserve it so much. We work on little to no paid time off; we have no benefits, so that means we have to pay for medical insurance. And the time off we do have includes sick time, so technically, it isn't vacation time. It's more like, "Let's hope that we don't sick so we can take that much-needed time off for ourselves." We also don't get paid enough as it is. It's so hard to live off of just the barely anything paycheck. Someone working in a fast food restaurant may make \$20 an hour, but I am making \$16 an hour as a teacher. I am not downing anyone who works in fast food, but I am just trying to prove that we do as much or more.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Kristin Silva

Teacher

The Academy for Little Children - Lincoln

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Amy Sherman, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Charlestown Early Learning Center.

I am a married mother of a teenage daughter living in Providence, RI. The COVID-19 pandemic ended my retail management career, and I was offered the chance to be a teaching assistant at a program that was very close to my family's heart. I love the fulfilling experience of working with preschool children every day and am currently taking classes to continue my early childhood education.

There is no way I would be able to take continuing education classes toward an early childhood degree or work at my childcare center without additional financial help. My husband is a retail manager, and we rely on two incomes to survive. Without the assistance of these programs, I would have had to return to a full-time retail job that was very stressful instead of pursuing a career change that I love.

I would like people to know I also have a second part-time job with a local organization where I work as part of the building and grounds team. At this job, I make more money per hour just emptying trash bins and doing menial labor than I do in teaching children every day. It is criminal how underpaid educators are, especially in early childhood programs, and it is not the center's fault...I am being paid comparable to other educators. It is still not enough.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Amy Sherman

Teacher's Assistant

Charlestown Early Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Kristin Segee, and I am a Teacher at Lollipop Learning Center LLC.

I love working with children. The early childhood field is all I have ever wanted to be in. Seeing my students every day is incredibly exciting.

The pandemic retention bonus and the Step Up to Wage\$ programs have been helping me keep up with bill paying and paying off some bills that I've had over the years. It also has helped me with emergencies - when things come up I know I have some money saved.

Please keep it going but maybe re-look at it and change who and how much everyone gets.

Because for myself, I work full time Monday through Friday, but there are people who only work one day a week and for maybe 5 hours.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Kristin Segee

Teacher

Lollipop Learning Center LLC

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Taylor Scudieri, and I am a Teacher at Child Care Plus Learning Center.

I am an early childhood educator because molding and shaping the children's future is so important. This retention bonus has helped tremendously and motivated me to stay within my career. Getting that added bonus is vital because we, as early childhood educators, are underpaid, and it is not financially sustainable to work in this field. The bonus helped me provide for my family and pay bills. Please keep this retention bonus.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Taylor Scudieri

Teacher

Child Care Plus Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Sol Segarra, and I am a Teacher at Metcalf Love4All.

I love working with the children, especially watching them learn and grow. It is an honor to teach children developmental skills to help them expand their knowledge and achieve their milestones.

Where I work, the Director has helped me work towards my CDA and Learners program. Being able to take these classes has helped me learn so much, from creating a welcoming, safe, loving, and print-rich classroom to learning how to teach each child individually by keeping in mind that all children have their own unique learning styles.

The money I have received from the funds has helped me buy materials for the classroom and pay bills with the cost of living that we are living now.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Sol Segarra

Teacher

Metcalf Love4All

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Erica Schiappa, and I am a Family Advocate at Tri-County Community Action Agency Head Start.

I work in the Early Childcare field but am not an educator. I have the privilege of being a Family Advocate or Social Worker for the families enrolled in the Head Start Program. I have been working for the same agency for over 19 years. I stay here because I love the work I do. I complete home visits to all my clients enrolled, no matter their living situation. I build meaningful and trusting relationships with them. Together, we set goals to improve their family well-being, their ability to advocate for themselves, and their knowledge of resources in their community. Not just anybody would do or could do my job, but I have chosen to do it for almost 2 decades. I have previously worked second jobs that allowed me to afford to work in this field. My family has made sacrifices to allow me to stay at a job I am so incredibly great at. The low hourly wage I receive is shameful compared to those working in other fields that do not carry the burden of the stress other families endure.

I am a Family Advocate/Case Manager for a Head Start Program. Technically, the retention bonus was geared toward educators, but luckily, my organization sees the value in each role working with families, therefore, I was eligible for the Retention Bonus. I am a family of 4. My husband has been a teacher for over 20 years and makes a relatively low salary. Due to the low wages in my field, we struggle and live paycheck to paycheck. With the rising costs in the supermarket, electricity, and everything, I often try to skip going to the market or cannot buy certain foods, such as fruits my family enjoys. Every bonus received does not give me the freedom to purchase new items or spend on anything luxurious; instead, it pays credit card debt accumulated from the basic needs of the grocery store. My children are in extracurricular sports, but maintaining them is a struggle. Without these bonuses next year, I would stress how to cut even more from our budget daily. I work just as hard as a Social Worker in a public school, and I get paid a fraction of the amount. I deserve a fair, livable wage comparable to those in the public school district. I am

constantly looking for new employment, but I love what I do and build exceptional relationships with the families I work with. These relationships help me to help them in countless ways. Helping a family get on SNAP, medical, WIC, and a job ultimately helps our community.

The retention bonuses were not enough to cover the change in the cost of living. I cannot even imagine the coming years without the additional funds.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Erica Schiappa

Family Advocate

Tri-County Community Action Agency Head Start

March 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Sandra Sayles, and I am a Director at WTG Child Care, LLC.

The pandemic retention bonus has been invaluable in attaining and retaining staff. Our center was on the verge of closing due to a lack of staffing, but using the bonus as an incentive has provided us with some leverage to obtain qualified staff. Please continue these programs and pass this bill.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Sandra Sayles

Director

WTG Child Care, LLC

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Heather Salisbury, and I am a Teacher's Assistant and Floater at A Family Tree Early Learning Center.

I love working with children and letting them learn and explore through creative play and imagination.

The pandemic retention bonus has helped keep us on top of bills (paying electricity so it wouldn't get shut off). Indeed, it has been a blessing in this awful sinking economy!

Childcare requires so much work, care, planning, and energy. You are in charge of caring for people's children, which is a HUGE responsibility, and people working at fast food or grocery stores start out making more money an hour! It's really sad!

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Heather Salisbury

Teacher's Assistant and Floater

A Family Tree Early Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Alishia Salerno, and I am a Teacher at Sunshine Child Development Center.

Ever since high school, I have wanted to work with children. I have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. I have worked in many capacities in the Early Childhood field. I want to advocate for others to be recognized and paid as a professional. I've been working with children for nearly 25 years, and I advocate for them in many different ways. Unfortunately, I do not get paid enough to live in this profession. I am advocating for more pay in this profession regardless of working for a profit organization. I work an 8-hour day, educating young children and nurturing their social and emotional skills. I am a part of the children's lives and work closely with their families to help their children navigate the world around them. The families depend on me and my colleagues to help their children learn and grow. Early childhood educators are not looked upon as professionals like public school teachers are. We, too, need degrees and continuing education, which we do on our own time. Therefore, we are not in a union and find it challenging to advocate for our financial stability. These programs have helped recruit and retain staff.

The money I received has helped me tremendously. My hourly wage is insufficient to meet my living expenses as inflation increases. This helped me continue to perform this very important work. I don't always receive an annual increase, which is not due to my job performance.

I would like for you to advocate for higher pay for Early Childhood Educators. I have a bachelor's degree and I cannot live on what I make annually. I work full-time and am passionate about my job and my children. The state should find more money to allocate to Early Childhood educators. The Step Up to Wage\$ program was helpful, and I don't think it should end. I will be financially stressed without this program. I've been employed at the same childcare for over 10 years now. For me to get a raise, my director has to increase tuition for families. As tuition increases, I see some families needing to leave because they can no longer afford it. I feel this is a trickle-down effect, and eventually, teachers start to leave the profession and center to find higher-paying jobs; therefore, we are in a staffing crisis. This staffing crisis has led to hiring persons with less formal

education and training. The education level of children is decreasing due to this staffing crisis. Retaining quality early childhood educators increases the long-established benefits for the children's educational success. Having a high turnover of quality educators decreases the child's educational outcome.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Alishia Salerno

Teacher

Sunshine Child Development Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Miriam Saldaña, and I am an Owner and Family Child Care Provider at Growing Together Home Day Care.

These funds have been very helpful because, thanks to them, I was able to survive during difficult times and continue paying my employees without having to send them home.

Although my house only has one income, I was able to get ahead of course with this help, which was very timely. Because I could use part of that money for my own daycare expenses.

The job of taking care of children is a very responsible and stressful job, but since I like my job and I love children, I do it with a lot of responsibility and respect the different cultures with which I work. Even though we don't have any health benefits or sick days, I still do what I love. Since today's children are the future of tomorrow.

Mi nombre es Miriam Saldaña y soy propietaria y proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Growing Together Home Day Care.

Estos fondos han sido de mucha ayuda, porque gracias a estos fondos pude subsistir durante los tiempos difíciles y poder seguir pagándole a mi empleados sin tener que mandarlo a la casa.

Aunque solo en mi casa entra un solo income, pude salir adelante por supuesto con esta ayuda que fue muy oportuna. Porque pude usar parte de ese dinero para los propios gastos del day care. El trabajo de cuidar niños es un trabajo de mucha responsabilidad y estresante, pero como me gusta mi trabajo y amo los niños lo hago con mucha responsabilidad y respeto las diferentes culturas con la que trabajo. Aunque no tenemos ningún beneficio de salud o días de enfermedad sigo haciendo lo que me gusta. Ya que los niños de hoy son el futuro del mañana.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Miriam Saldaña

Owner and Family Child Care Provider

Growing Together Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Chelsea Roy, and I am a Teacher at Sunshine Early Child Care Center.

I have been working at Sunshine since 2008. I went to school and got my associate's degree in this field because it's something I LOVE to do. Unfortunately, I don't do this job because of the money. I am very educated in the field and have learned so much during my time at this center. I run a successful Preschool Classroom all by myself with 9 children. I work hard to keep my classroom the way it runs and have many happy parents who have kept in touch over the years to keep me involved in their children's lives. Sadly, even though I love what I do with the grants and extra funding, I might need to change career paths to be able to support my own family. Big corporate companies are starting to pay more than \$20 an hour. I get paid less than that for a challenging yet rewarding job. No, I am not a babysitter; I am an early childhood educator who knows developmentally appropriate milestones, fights for children with developmental delays to get an IEP and attend the school department, and keeps a fun learning environment. I could go on and on about the importance of my job. I have filled out multiple surveys to advocate for early childhood educators. Yet nothing ever gets done, so it's very infuriating, instead of spending millions of dollars on changing a newly developed program from Exceed to Workforce. I think the money should have been given to the people who work with the children daily.

The \$750 quarterly grant money did help me by allowing me to pay my bills on time and not have bills double up. The cost of living and food prices are outrageous now with inflation. Even when buying store-brand items or shopping just for sales, spending less than \$100 at the grocery store is impossible. I have stayed in this field for the last few months solely because I got the extra advantages, and I love what I do. The day came when I could work mother hours and get paid more money working at a corporate company. The state of RI knows how many early childhood educators are underpaid with their degrees since we must submit that information yearly for licensing purposes. So, I don't understand how shocking it was when so many people applied. I have filled out Step Up to Wage\$ surveys and Retention Grant surveys and signed up for Zoom meetings to advocate for Early Childhood Educators, yet I don't seem to be getting anywhere. You

say you want us to advocate, but is anyone really reading these responses?

I would like you to ask policymakers and funders if they have ever stepped foot in an Early Childhood Center. I would like to know if they really know what it's like being in this field for 8-plus hours a day and see what the day consists of. WE NEED FUNDING to help the community and the state of Rhode Island. Our children are one of the most essential things in our lives, but are we willing to have somebody come and take care of them for minimum wage? We need educated staff to stay in the field! People with degrees of all types attend training and are educated in the field. This is NOT a minimum-wage job. Anyone with a degree in this field should make over \$20 an hour with a consistent yearly review.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Chelsea Roy

Teacher

Sunshine Early Child Care Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Altagracia Rojas, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Divino Nino Home Day Care.

These programs are helpful because I like to educate children from my home. This helped me greatly in keeping my daycare open. For me, the financial aid was very beneficial.

Mi nombre es Altagracia Rojas y soy un proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Divino Nino Home Day Care.

Estos programas son útil porque me gusta educar a los niños desde mi casa. Me ayudaron grandemente esas ayuda, para poder mantener mi daycare abierto. Que para mi las ayuda financiera fueron muy beneficosas.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Altagracias Rojas

Family Child Care Provider

Divino Nino Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Kelly Winifred, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Workshop Rumford.

I was a preschool teacher from 1980- 2012. I retired in 2012 and always loved working with children in an early education setting. I became a teacher's assistant in 2019. These programs have been a significant financial help, especially as our pay is minimal.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Kelly Winifred

Teacher's Assistant

Children's Workshop Rumford

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Valerie Toubas, and I am a Teacher at Love4All.

I am an early childhood educator because I am passionate about fueling the next generation and pouring love into the lives of precious little ones. Having a nurturing and consistent caregiver is vital for the healthy development of young children, and I am honored to play that role for them daily.

I would not be able to stay at my job with my current pay had it not been for the supplemental help of the pandemic retention bonus and the Step up to Wage\$ programs. My regular income cannot provide for my basic needs and help me save for the future.

Please consider continuing this funding for not only the educators' sake but also for these students to keep their teachers whom they have grown so comfortable and close with.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Valerie Toubas

Teacher

Love4All

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Tynicka Tillman, and I am a Teacher at Stork's Nest Child Academy.

I am a Kindergarten and K-Prep teacher working in a childcare facility in East Greenwich, RI. I have worked there since January 2011. Before this, I worked at a non-profit childcare center in Providence, RI. I graduated from Mount Pleasant High School's Teacher Academy in 2002 and Wheelock College with a degree as a Child Care Specialist in 2006. Ever since I can remember, I have always been "a teacher." While other kids were doing what kids do, I often stayed inside and prepared "lessons" for my younger cousins or stuffed animals. Although I was told that if you go to school for teaching, you can't do it for the money, I didn't care. Teaching and nurturing our nation's children is a work of heart. I believe that through our work with children, we can help shape and change the future. I may not be able to change the world alone, but through teaching, I can help plant the seeds for change and foster a love of learning in our youth.

It wasn't long after entering the workforce before I realized that if you are not working in the public education system, you REALLY are going to have a hard time making ends meet.

Unfortunately, childcare workers are not paid sufficiently, even those highly qualified with college credits or ECE degrees. My student loans have been in forbearance for as long as I can remember. Despite what I was told before graduating, childcare educator pay rates do not give much room for paying for your needs and bills. My student loan amount is about as much as the accumulated interest due to being unable to make payments without sacrificing buying my children food or paying for shelter. These grants have allowed us to have actual breathing room. It has allowed me to put money aside for Christmas presents without struggling, purchasing birthday gifts, and even keeping up with fulfilling the clothing and food needs of two growing boys. These grants have also allowed me to invest more money and time into my classroom, which is like my second home. I can afford a mortgage payment for my family's first home rather than paying rent for a multi-family apartment. If these grants can be continued, I can get out of debt, which, at this point, I never thought would be possible without filing for bankruptcy.

I would mainly like policymakers and funders to truly hear our cries. Taking care of children, nurturing them, fostering a love of learning, and caring for the whole child's development is an asset to our world AND economy. We are losing qualified teachers daily. We are short-staffed too often and stretched terribly thin, yet those who stay cannot help but give it all that we have...until we have no more to give and must consider leaving a career we are passionate about. I have watched qualified teachers resign from the field reluctantly for higher-paying jobs. Our children deserve the best. They deserve teachers who love teaching and deserve to do what they love without sacrificing financial stability and growth.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Tynicka Tillman

Teacher

Stork's Nest Child Academy

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Valerie Toubia, and I am a Teacher at Love4All.

I am an early childhood educator because I am passionate about fueling the next generation and pouring love into the lives of precious little ones. Having a nurturing and consistent caregiver is vital for the healthy development of young children, and I am honored to play that role for them daily.

I would not be able to stay at my job with my current pay had it not been for the supplemental help of the pandemic retention bonus and the Step up to Wage\$ programs. My regular income cannot provide for my basic needs and help me save for the future.

Please consider continuing this funding for not only the educators' sake but also for these students to keep their teachers whom they have grown so comfortable and close with.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Valerie Toubia

Teacher

Love4All

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Emma Tellier, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Sacred Heart School.

I am currently a TA in a Catholic school. I started my job here as a toddler teacher but when our daycare program closed, I merged into the school as a TA. I just recently graduated with my bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders and I am currently in a master's program for Speech-Language Pathology. Working as a TA has been a great stepping stone to learning the ins and outs of the education system.

I am so proud to say that with these grants, I have been able to graduate with my bachelors degree debt free. The grants have kept me from taking out any loans and have given me the piece of mind to continue on my education in a graduate degree.

Myself and my coworkers are such a close knit family, and in a particularly difficult field these grants have been the one constant that make the field more doable. The school we work for is small, and our pay often doesn't reciprocate the degree of our responsibilities. At the end of the day, we are early childhood educators for the children.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Emma Tellier

Teacher's Assistant

Sacred Heart School

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Giomery Tejada, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at a Home Day Care.

I have been educating early childhood children for 25 years, and I am very proud of my work. I want to give infinite thanks for the help you have given us because after the pandemic, I have been affected and have had fewer children, but thank God and these funds, I have been able to keep my program open; it would be a great help if you keep these funds open.

They have helped me a lot, and because of those funds I have been able to have my program open. Educating children has been, is, and will be my passion. I love my job.

Mi nombre es Giomery Tejada y soy proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en una Home Day Care.

Tengo 25 años educando niños de la primera infancia y estoy muy orgullosa de mi trabajo. Quiero dar gracias infinita a la ayuda que nos han dado porque después de la pandemia me he visto afectada y he tenido menos niños, pero gracias a Dios y a estos fondos he podido mantener mi programa abierto; sería de gran ayuda si mantienen estos fondos abierto.

Me han ayudado mucho, y por esos fondos he podido tener mi programa abierto. Educar niños ha sido, es y será mi pasión. Amo mi trabajo.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Giomery Tejada

Family Child Care Provider

Home Day Care

April 30nd, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Mirtha Tavarez, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at My Second Home Day Care.

The retention bonus helped me keep my doors open since, with it, I was able to pay part of my utilities and I was able to make some adjustments to my day care. I hope to continue receiving this help and improve my daycare.

May you continue supporting early childhood educators, offering a quality program, and not having to leave our jobs due to lack of resources.

Mi nombre es Mirtha Tavarez y soy proveedora ciudad familiar en My Second Home Day Care.

El bono de retention me ayudo a mantener mis puertas abiertas , ya que con eso pude pagar parte de mi utilidades, y pude hacer algunos arreglos a mi day care. Espero poder seguir recibiendo esta ayuda y para mejorar mi day care.

Que sigan apoyando a los educadotes de primera infancia, para seguir ofreciendo un programa de calidad, y no tener que dejar nuestro trabajos por falta de recursos.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Mirtha Tavarez

Family Child Care Provider

My Second Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Nina Tavares, and I am an Owner and Family Child Care Provider at Nina's Home Day Care.

Teaching has been my dream come true for me. I have been teaching infants- pre-k for 13 years now. I don't see myself doing anything else. My oldest son helped me gain an interest in caring for children with delayed motor skills and language development. I believe each child learns at their own pace. Childcare and teachers are one team that communicates to help children grow.

I have owned and operated my childcare home for 3 years now. We have so much diversity and involvement within the city of Providence. I never closed my communication with the Elmhurst community. We will forever be the support when it comes to raising children. My husband and I have 4 children who are now in school. So, people come to us as veterans when it comes to children.

The funding has made us always want to improve our daycare materials. With the grants, we have purchased office supplies, classroom toys, and backyard equipment. Each year, we update all materials, and our goal is to have updated motor skill activities as the children grow continuously. We have been able to do family engagement nights in our backyard and prepare for a pre-k classroom setting. Over the past couple of years, I have become a voice for all Hispanic women who want to open a business and have been able to help anyone interested in childcare in our city.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Nina Tavares

Owner and Family Child Care Provider

Nina's Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Kelsey Swanson, and I am a Teacher at Child Care Plus Learning Center.

I am an infant lead teacher who ensures the safety, care, love, and development of all infants entering our care.

The pandemic retention bonus program helped compensate for a low wage compared to inflation and cost of living. It has ensured my bills are covered.

I believe this grant should be extended due to the continued problem of inflation. People of all situations struggle to keep up with expenses.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Kelsey Swanson

Teacher

Child Care Plus Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Melanie Spavold, and I am a Teacher at Tri-County Head Start.

I am an early childhood educator because I love to care for children. Teaching children is a rewarding feeling, and so is being a safe person that is consistent for today's youth.

Financially this helped my family pay for our housing, food, and occasionally going out to eat. These bonuses helped me stay in my position because, financially, I could help support my family and know that my job is valuable and appreciated. Thank you for these.

I feel my family, and I are in the "middle ground". We "make too much" to qualify for any services or support but barely scrape by with bills and other necessities. These bonuses provided some comfort and eliminated stress. Please consider working to support families and those in the education field. It means a lot to us.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Melanie Spavold

Teacher

Tri-County Head Start

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Katherine St. Germain, and I am a Teacher at Johnston Child Care Center.

For over 30 years, my mother served in all facets of childcare, from teacher to curriculum development to director. I wanted no part of that career path, so I opted to work in retail instead. Growing up and having my own children, I became more invested in early childhood education. After my second birthday, I decided to try my hand at being a preschool teacher. I felt it was a much more rewarding career choice, and I am proud to impact future generations.

I have been lucky enough to receive retention bonuses from the beginning of the program. Let me say the funds have come in handy every time! From car repairs to my son needing braces to Christmas gifts, the extra money has been a lifesaver for my family! I would seriously consider another career path if the programs are not offered. I know funding is limited, but I feel like child care is an area that the state should value enough to spend more money on. Children need a strong academic and social support foundation to thrive in schools, and we've seen a decline in school attendance, test scores, etc. As someone who cares deeply about children, I find it very sad to see that.

As I stated, I used to work in retail. I took a pay cut to join the child care field, but I thought it was a more impactful choice. I didn't want to look back and see that my contribution to my community was just selling 'stuff.' I have so much joy knowing that I am making a difference in the lives of my students and paving a path to their academic success. Lately, however, it has been harder to make ends meet, and I fear returning to the retail field for more money. Childcare is a wildly undervalued and underpaid profession. It's very disheartening that a kid fresh out of high school walking into a Walmart for their first job could make more than a teacher who literally creates lesson plans, age-appropriate crafts, conferences with parents, is required to take professional development courses, buys supplies out of pocket, and takes their work home with them nightly would be on the same pay scale. I would like the policymakers to know that you get what you pay for, and if we'd like to retain capable, caring, and invested teachers in the state, we

should be able to pay them more. The future of education starts young, and we need to invest in children from the start.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Katherine St. Germain

Teacher

Johnston Child Care Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Lisa Sorel, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare Smithfield.

From early on, I knew I wanted to work with kids. My personal life came first, and I began as a mom in my early twenties. I was fortunate that I was able to stay home and raise my children before using my schooling. When my girls entered preschool, I witnessed how they grew leaps and bounds socially and educationally; I decided when my girls entered school full-time, I would work with the state's youngest learners to help them achieve what I was witnessing in my girls firsthand.

The bonuses supplemented my low wages to allow me to continue doing what I love while still providing for my family and giving them a quality life.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Lisa Sorel

Teacher

Dr. Daycare Smithfield

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Leyla Iglesias Soler, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Dr. Day Care.

I am an early childhood educator because I feel as if I want to help give kids the best education and care that I can provide. Growing up, I didn't have the best education due to the teachers not helping kids when they needed assistance and would get aggravated when it came to specific situations and students. I feel as if it's my job to go to work and make the kids feel unstoppable, and they get better every day!

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Leyla Iglesias Soler

Teacher's Assistant

Dr. Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Carmen Soares, and I am a Teacher at Mount Hope Childcare Center.

I've been in the early childhood field for over 35 years. During my time in this field, I've seen staff come and go, watched directors struggle to allow planning time for teachers to plan accordingly, and also got and feel disrespected throughout my time. Our buildings are so short-staffed, and we're underpaid. I spend a lot of money from my pocket to keep great activities consistent and keep my students engaged and interested in the curriculum daily. I spend more money in my class weekly and am not reimbursed. I invest in my class and my students to have excellent outcomes in the end, and I do it because this is what I love doing.

The pandemic retention bonus and the Step Up to Wage\$ Program have been such an asset because the extra money made me feel like I wasn't putting a dent in my pocket every time I purchased an item for my classroom.

It would be a great deal and an asset to allow these programs to continue because we are molding minds, and our positions are just as important as the teachers working in the school department because we are doing the prep work for those teachers. We do not get compensation or notoriety for our efforts and hard work.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Carmen Soares

Teacher

Mount Hope Childcare Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Madelein Gutierrez, and I am a Teacher and Education Coordinator at Creative Early Learning Center.

Being an educator is my vocation and is why I achieved my bachelor's degree in early childhood education in my country of origin. Since practicing my career, I have always felt I was in the right place. I'm 45 years old and don't see myself doing anything different.

"The pandemic hit us hard, and we have not been able to recover." "We're not making enough money," and "I don't even know if we can stay open." Those are the answers I have heard for five years every time I ask about a salary increase. Although I can verify the low numbers in the classrooms, I can't survive on 2,400 dollars a month in an economy as hurt as ours. If I hadn't had the financial aid, remaining in this field of work would have been impossible.

Financial aid has saved me from having an exhausting second job or definitively giving up on early childhood education because the workload and demands of our work take so much time, even during our time at home, that it becomes exhausting and not financially rewarding.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Madelein Gutierrez

Teacher and Education Coordinator

Creative Early Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Julie Vakian, and I am a Teacher at the Children's Workshop.

I am truly happy doing what I do and love going to work every day. I know that I make a difference in the lives of the infants I take care of, as well as their families.

Unfortunately, there isn't enough money in the field of child care. Despite how hard we work and how qualified/professional- we do not get paid enough money. This bonus is a big help; it is money we work hard for and deserve.

If the state of RI wants to provide quality child care, we NEED to continue funding programs like the pandemic retention bonus and free childcare for childcare workers.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Julie Vakian

Teacher

Children's Workshop

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Yeisha Yeraliz, and I am a Teacher at Althea Children's Friends.

This is the best program for me and my family. I can work and support my disabled child thanks to these funds.

These programs help to keep me working and support my family. Thank you.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Yeisha Yeraliz

Teacher

Althea Children's Friends

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Simone Woods, and I am a Family Child Care Assistant at Nanny's House.

Working with children during their formative years is a privilege. When they get quality care, love, and attention right from the start, they get the best foundations to build bright futures. I love my job and care that the children leaving our family's childcare are kind, thoughtful, and curious about learning. Teachers and childcare staff do not get paid what they should- but good providers continue to do their job because it's rewarding and makes a positive difference.

The pandemic retention bonus helped my family to be able to spend time together on day trips and vacations that would be much harder to afford on my regular pay -it also was an incentive for me to continue at my program with a regular schedule. I also work a second job in a non-childcare setting.

I feel strongly that if an individual must leave one childcare setting to begin directly at another one in RI and be on the list, they should not lose the opportunity to claim the bonus. My specific example is someone who left an eligible program because there weren't enough hours available and went directly to another eligible program with no gap in employment. Because they switched programs, they were deemed ineligible. I don't think that's fair, and different circumstances should be considered.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Simone Woods

Family Child Care Assistant

Nanny's House

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Kelly Winifred, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Workshop Rumford.

I was a preschool teacher from 1980- 2012. I retired in 2012 and always loved working with children in an early education setting. I became a teacher's assistant in 2019. These programs have been a significant financial help, especially as our pay is minimal.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Kelly Winifred

Teacher's Assistant

Children's Workshop Rumford

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Brittany Williams, and I am a Teacher at Sunshine Child Development Center.

I work with children because it is one of the most rewarding jobs. Seeing them hit their milestones with and without my help is one of the best things!

If not for the Pandemic Retention Bonus, I would have been forced to quit the job I love and find another job that pays more so I can pay my bills and eat. These programs have helped me SO MUCH financially, and I dread the day these programs are taken from us. I don't want to work in another field, but financially, without the programs, I would have to find a higher-paying job that's significantly less rewarding.

We are ESSENTIAL! We raise children and teach them while their parents work hard to provide for them, and we deserve so much more than what we are paid.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Brittany Williams

Teacher

Sunshine Child Development Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Lynne Way, and I am a Teacher and Administrator at Montessori of Greenwich Bay.

The retention bonus was extremely helpful and has been a HUGE asset to my staff, especially in terms of having extra money. It shows that their work is valued.

It helped me, but it was a true gift for my staff. I feel like I pay well, but overall, early childhood is underpaid for the value it provides.

We would all be grateful if the state continued to have grants, even small ones.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Lynne Way

Teacher and Administrator

Montessori of Greenwich Bay

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Marie Walkow, and I am the Owner at My Learning Tree.

I own three centers and struggle to hire and retain qualified candidates. The three programs that are slated to end made a difference! We need help now to be able to continue to care and educate Rhode Island's youngest citizens!

The programs helped my centers by helping my staff. They work hard and need more support than I can offer alone.

Child care is a necessity, not a luxury. Families can only pay so much. As an owner, I can only pay so much. We need our state to step up and help us in order to keep the general workforce intact.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Marie Walkow

Owner

My Learning Tree

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Patricia Waldman, and I am a Teacher at Woonsocket Head Start.

Many of the children in our program are from low-income families and need high-quality, dependable, nurturing caregivers to help with caring for and raising their children. The children in my care thrive from the consistency that we provide. I would not be able to stay in this profession I love without the bonuses I receive multiple times a year.

The retention bonuses have helped me pay bills as the cost of living increases. My salary or any increases I may receive through my company (cost of living raises) don't come close to what it costs to live in Rhode Island. I depend on these bonuses to continue to live in Rhode Island and stay employed at WHSCDA, caring for the children and their families. I work with people who benefit from the CCAP For Educators program as well because what's the point of working if most of your salary goes to paying for your child to go to childcare? With this benefit, my co-workers are able to continue to work and provide a quality program for children in their care while not having to worry so much about how they will afford childcare for their own children.

I implore you to continue offering these programs to Rhode Island childcare staff. I'd hate to see more childcare centers close because they lose more qualified educators because they have to find other work to survive in Rhode Island. Thank you

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Patricia Waldman

Teacher

Woonsocket Head Start

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Emma Villa, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Emma's Home Day Care.

It is my vocation, and I like my job. I have done it for 22 years and I find that I was able to help children with their learning and their skills.

They have been very helpful since household utilities, such as electricity, gas, rent, etc., are necessary whether or not I have income from my work.

These aids should be extended because they are very helpful since there is not much eligibility for parents.

Mi nombre es Emma Villa y soy un Proveedora de Cuido Infantil Familiar en Emma's Home Day Care.

Es mi vocación y me gusta mi trabajo. Lo echo por 22 años y encuentro , que pu do ayudar a los niños con su aprendizaje y sus destrezas.

An sido de mucha ayuda ya que las utilidades del hogar como ,Luz,Gas ,Renta etc son necesarios tenga o no ingresos por mi trabajo.

Estas ayudas deberían extenderse, por que son de mucha ayuda ya que no ahí mucha elegibilidad para los padres.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Emma Villa

Family Child Care Provider

Emma's Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Jessica Viau, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at the Children's Workshop - Providence.

I love working with kids. I love helping make their world a better place.

These programs did not do much for me because my house hold income is too high to receive childcare assistance, and I almost lost the discount through work because I did not qualify (my discount was threatened if I did not apply). I missed the cut-off for the Wage\$ program by 8 cents. I got a raise at the beginning of September, got approved for the application process 2 weeks later, and lost out on the grant. I only work 43 weeks and do not make the same yearly amount that someone who works 52 makes, but I was not qualified because I was making \$23.08 an hour.

Please consider making an across-the-board pay stipend for ECE professionals that all teachers get on top of their pay from their individual employers.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Jessica Viau

Teacher's Assistant

Children's Workshop - Providence

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Silvia Velez, and I am a Service Coordinator in Early Intervention.

I am a mother of three boys, 13, 3, and 18 months. I graduated from RIC almost two years ago and started working in Early Intervention for a non-profit organization right after. My 3-year-old is in daycare full-time and has been with EI since he was about 18 months old. He recently qualified for speech services through the school department but is not entering into a Pre-K classroom until September of 2025 due to when his birthday lands. That said, we have at least two more years of paying for childcare. Our youngest will be starting daycare when he turns 18 months in February (hopefully).

Thankfully, our jobs have been flexible enough and understanding to allow us to work from home some days because of the baby. Come February, the cost of childcare for both kids will be almost the same as my paycheck, which is crazy! This conflict has had me contemplating whether or not I need to stop working altogether or leave a job I currently enjoy and has such a high demand. Before I started working for EI, I used to work for a daycare and qualified for the retention bonus during its first window. I could not qualify after because I left working at the daycare in exchange for somewhat of an increase in working for EI. I seem to fall in between all the cracks of opportunities that are out there.

I was very excited to apply for the Child Care pilot program, which was promoted for Early Childhood Educators. When I went to apply, I could not because I don't work in a DHS-licensed daycare. My hope is that by sharing my story, I can be part of the change. I pray I don't have to make the difficult decision to stop working but that something gets done soon enough for families (my family) to benefit from the change.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Silvia Velez

Service Coordinator

Early Intervention

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Jessica Vargas, and I am a Teacher at Beautiful Beginnings.

The children need us educators, and they are our future. It takes a village when it comes to children. Without the village, these families would have had hard times.

What is there not to say about these programs that have helped us? Child care for one is a significant factor in a family's life. We lean on our community for help, and with the CCAP Pilot, I know my son is in the care he deserves. The retention bonus has helped me tremendously. I've been able to pay for child care (before the pilot) and ensure my son's education by leaning on my village.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Jessica Vargas

Teacher

Beautiful Beginnings

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Haley Olbrych, and I am a Teacher at Children's Workshop.

I'm an Early Head Start Teacher and started working in the field 7 years ago because I loved being a nanny. I'm finishing my bachelor's degree in ECE and love my job!

The bonus helped me make ends meet financially, and the CCAP program helped relieve my worry about how to afford childcare for my kids. Please continue these programs.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.

Haley Olbrych

Teacher

Children's Workshop

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Aruna Rajaratnam, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Progressive Learning for Children.

I have my associate's degree in early childhood education and have worked in this field for 18 years. I feel I have a very important job of caring for precious children and molding their minds, but my money doesn't even dent the bills I have to pay. If I were my family's main breadwinner, I would have been forced to find a different field of work.

I love working with children; I want to be recognized for all our hard work and paid accordingly.

Step up to Wage\$, and the grants helped me so much with my bills, and I want it to continue. The money childcare workers make an hour is so low. I wish there were a rule that the workers should make at least 18 dollars an hour.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Aruna Rajaratnam

Teacher's Assistant

Progressive Learning for Children

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Wesly Powell, and I am a Director at Lincoln Learning.

I grew up learning about the preschool industry through my mother's center. I went to college and got my Masters in the health field but missed working with children. I went back to my roots and opened an FCC about a year and a half ago.

The Pandemic Bonus was fantastic for alleviating the school's onboarding costs. I am still not profiting, and this has helped me so much. Sadly, I was denied WAGE\$, but it is also a wonderful program that should be continued.

This has helped with having qualified applicants and retention. It's difficult when a teacher moves on, and parents immediately think the company is doing something wrong. I'm very supportive of the team, but there isn't much we can pay teachers while still offering a manageable rate for parents. All quality equipment/supplies costs are rising, and hosting multiple parent engagement events/holiday events throughout the year leaves a very slim margin of profitability.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Wesly Powell

Director

Lincoln Learning

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Jacqueline Lawson, and I am a Teacher at the David C. Isenberg Family Child Care Center.

I work as a toddler teacher. I love kids, and I worked as a nanny for twenty -four years. I then went to work at a daycare center, and I'm still there. Trying to make ends meet is very hard, but I'm going on because of my love for the kids in my class. I want to see the kids that I teach make something of their lives in the future. Teaching them at this early age is beneficial for them. They are our future, and we must support them in any way, shape, or form, and that's why I'm an Early Childhood Educator.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Jacqueline Lawson

Teacher

David C. Isenberg Family Child Care Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Christina Loureiro, and I am the Assistant Director at Federal Hill House.

I have always wanted to be an educator. I have been in the field for 16 years and have worked myself up to being an assistant director. I received two degrees in the field and had no intentions of leaving anywhere.

Although I participated in all 3 of the programs, the one that has helped me the most in the past year was the child care for childcare workers. In June 2023, I had a set of twins. While on maternity leave, I was terrified at the thought of having to return to work just as any new mom. But the thought of having to pay for a \$300 tuition a week was crippling. It is only \$300 because of a 50% discount offered through my job. I had started to look for other jobs. I came across that the pay for educators does not get much higher. I held a college degree and was faced with the possibility of being unable to stay in the field I love. With this program, I can focus on living and enjoying my family and work instead of giving half my paycheck to childcare costs.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Christina Loureiro

Assistant Director

Federal Hill House

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Diana Low, and I am a Teacher at Progressive Learning for Children.

I am passionate about young children and have worked in the early childhood field for 24 years now. I have a bachelor's degree but enjoy working with preschool-aged children. I am able to stay in this job with the help of these programs. I can make more money in the school system, but happiness is more important, and shaping the lives of young children is all I know!

I am a full-time childcare educator supporting 2 children on top of everyday expenses. I started to look for another job, but then the Wage\$ program came along and compensated for my low pay. These programs keep me afloat in the field I love.

The early childhood field is one of the most important fields, but what we do is not acknowledged. We are responsible for the health and well-being of infants to 5 years old. Our pay does not reflect what we do as educators.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Diana Low

Teacher

Progressive Learning for Children

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Krystal MacKenzie, and I am a Teacher at Hamlet Learning Center.

I am a mom of 3. I love my job, and I take pride in coming to work every day and providing an excellent learning environment

The pandemic retention bonus has helped my family a great deal. With inflation rising, the bonus gives me extra money to care for my household. As a single mother of 3, I struggle to get by with everything being so expensive. We teachers are not paid enough, so these programs help a lot. If the programs are taken away, many teachers and students will suffer. Most teachers will need a second job just to get by, and all that will do is wear teachers out, and the students will suffer.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Krystal MacKenzie

Teacher

Hamlet Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Lucia, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Friend

These programs helped me a lot to pay for many medical bills, and my home.

We are not just ordinary teachers; We are also from the community with many needs, which we see as the best teaching, but we also see for the well-being of the children in our class, doing extra, such as helping them find the best service for their needs that each family has (providing them with information about resources of free clothes, food, needs of each home, translation even when some parents are illiterate in their native language) each family becomes an important piece in the healthy education for their children. We try to help them have the support and balance they need for each child's educational and emotional well-being.

Mi nombre es Lucia y soy una asistente de maestra en Children's Friend.

Estos programas me ayudo muchísimo a poder pagar muchos billes médicos, y mi hogar.

No solo somos maestras comunes y corrientes; también somos de la comunidad con muchas necesidades, que vemos por la mejor enseñanza, pero también vemos por el bienestar de los niños de nuestra clase, haciendo extra, como ayudarlos a encontrar el mejor servicio para sus necesidades que tienen cada familia(proveerles información de recursos de ropas free, alimentos, necesidades de cada hogar, traducción aun cuando algunos padres son analfabetos en su lengua materna)cada familia pasa a ser una pieza importante en la educación sana para sus hijos.

Tratamos de ayudarlos a tener ese sostén y equilibrio que necesitan para el bienestar Educativo y emocional de cada niño.

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Lucia Teacher's Assistant

Children's Friend

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Lisa Mailloux, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Village Childcare LLC.

Hiring staff is my biggest challenge. Continued support is crucial and will help me hire and retain employees. My staff cares for 12 children daily, which is no easy feat.

My assistants and I have received the pandemic grants and have used them to supplement their income. Without these, I would have to pass on the expense to families to retain my teachers.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Lisa Mailloux

Family Child Care Provider

Village Care LLC

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Erica Vanner, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at WHSCDA.

I began my career in early childhood right from high school. I took out student loans to pay for my college education and receive my associate's degree in ED. Unfortunately, due to cost and repayment, I could not continue my education for my BA. I have been working for WHSCDA Inc. for eighteen and a half years. My son attended the agency from 8 weeks old till he went to Kindergarten.

Without the help of the Pandemic Retention Bonus, my family would not have been able to keep food on our table and have a roof over our heads. The rising cost of living makes it challenging to stay in the black at the income RI pays its teachers.

Early education sets the foundation for lifelong learning. Since COVID, there has been a lot of loss in educators. We have also seen a rise in behavioral/social-emotional needs that are taking a toll on us educators. We are exhausted physically and emotionally. The bonuses helped relieve some of that by removing the worry of where our next meal would come from. As someone who has been in education for over 18 years, I beg you to please think of a long-term solution to help early educators keep up with secondary educators. We are the foundation of learning.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Erica Vanner

Teacher's Assistant

WHSCDA

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Christine Vales, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare.

I am an early childhood educator, and I believe being a positive role model for children is a lifetime-rewarding position. I enjoy working at Dr. Daycare. Early childhood educators have the real opportunity to make a difference in young lives and influence future generations. They get to ensure that children get off to a good start in their lives and their learning. They get to teach students things that they'll carry for life.

In early childhood, our work is with young children and the whole family. Early educators have the opportunity to provide connections to community resources and support to help families thrive.

The Pandemic Retention Bonus was able to help me in so many different ways. The one thing that matters most to me is helping my mom. She's a diabetic, and all I have left - my father died 5 years ago, and he is no longer here to support her, so this program has helped me to get my mother's medication and assist with things she needs. I help the children I teach because of her, so I give back as my mother raised me to teach one, give one.

This program is helping me in a time of need, and many more have expressed what this program helps them accomplish. My story and proof are for the children I teach and our future.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Christine Vales

Teacher

Dr. Daycare

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Patricia Waldman, and I am a Teacher at Woonsocket Head Start.

Many of the children in our program are from low-income families and need high-quality, dependable, nurturing caregivers to help with caring for and raising their children. The children in my care thrive from the consistency that we provide. I would not be able to stay in this profession I love without the bonuses I receive multiple times a year.

The retention bonuses have helped me pay bills as the cost of living increases. My salary or any increases I may receive through my company (cost of living raises) don't come close to what it costs to live in Rhode Island. I depend on these bonuses to continue to live in Rhode Island and stay employed at WHSCDA, caring for the children and their families. I work with people who benefit from the CCAP For Educators program as well because what's the point of working if most of your salary goes to paying for your child to go to childcare? With this benefit, my co-workers are able to continue to work and provide a quality program for children in their care while not having to worry so much about how they will afford childcare for their own children.

I implore you to continue offering these programs to Rhode Island childcare staff. I'd hate to see more childcare centers close because they lose more qualified educators because they have to find other work to survive in Rhode Island. Thank you

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Patricia Waldman

Teacher

Woonsocket Head Start

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Emily Vaccaro, and I am a Teacher at Roger Williams Day Care Center.

I went to a local college for my early childhood education degree. I love my field of work. Each group of students becomes my kids, and I love watching them grow and learn.

The programs above helped me pay for groceries and other needed items. They have helped me stay at my job for almost 3 years now. We need to be paid a livable wage. We are short-staffed, underpaid, overworked, and burnt out. Many coworkers have left or are planning on leaving because of being unable to pay bills. Daycares are unable to keep staff or increase staff because no one wants to work at a high-demand job that pays less than fast food

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Emily Vaccaro

Teacher

Roger Williams Day Care Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in **strong support** of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Soleny Ulloa, and I am a Teacher at Soly Home Day Care.

Our work is essential for parents since we take care of their children while they work.

Since we do a good job, they should increase the increase for the suppliers. Our earnings are insufficient to meet all our needs since everything is expensive.

Mi nombre es Soleny Ulloa, y soy una maestra en Soly Home Day Care.

Nuestro trabajo es indispensable para los padres ya que cuidamos sus hijos mientras ellos trabajan.

Ya que hacemos un buen trabajo deberían subir el aumento para los proveedores lo que estamos ganando no alcanzamos para suplir todas las necesidades ya que está todo caro .

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Soleny Ulloa

Teacher

Soly Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Virginia Twomey, and I am an On-Site Support Staff at Head Start.

Soon after starting in my position, I needed to purchase a vehicle because the bus was not an option. I was excited to learn I would receive the retention bonus to help with my car payment. Unfortunately, we received news that the bonuses will be stopped soon. I may have to look for another position outside of early childhood education.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Virginia Twomey

On-Site Support Staff

Head Start

April 30, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support for House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Erica Pollitt, and I am a Teacher at Countryside Children Center.

What job is better than spending your days creating a safe environment and getting to teach children through play? What a joy it is for me to watch the children create, learn, and grow by just being themselves. With the cost of everything increasing, the programs have helped to maintain current with rent, utilities, groceries, medical, and other bills.

It was nice to be able to help move one of our children out of state and not worry about how we would make up the money missed from not working.

Without the programs, I may have to take on a second job if things continue to rise.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Erica Pollitt

Teacher

Countryside Children Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Christine Audette, and I am a Teacher at Wood River Preschool.

I love children and feel they deserve good, loving people to teach them. I have always wanted to be a teacher, and I believe that what children learn while they are young makes a lasting impression on them and helps shape who they will become. Building a solid foundation for their futures and helping them become good and productive members of the community in which they will live. I have worked at Wood River for twenty years and love my job. I am a mom of three and a Grandma of four, and I know how much other great teachers have helped my family.

Receiving the retention bonus was a Godsend in my life. Situations at home have made me cut my work hours, adding to the financial strain already in my life. When I found out about the retention bonus, I was so happy. It has helped a great deal. It has helped us pay some bills, and every little bit of money helps.

It is frustrating to know I could work at McDonald's and make more money than I am now. Working with the country's future should be considered one of the most important roles, and we should be paid accordingly. Teachers are a critical element and the foundation for a child's continuing success going forward in their life. Our jobs are important and should be looked upon as such. Teachers are an essential part of all children's lives. Please help us stay in the jobs we love by financially helping us do so.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Christina Audette

Teacher

Wood River Preschool

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support for House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Katherine Bailey, and I am a Teacher at Mount Hope Childcare.

I have been a teacher since I was 18, I am now 51 years old. The pay has always been poor, but it is a very rewarding career.

These programs (pandemic retention bonuses and the Wage\$ Supplement) have helped me and my family with our financial needs.

We need more money – we are caring for others children, and it is a huge responsibility

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Katherine Bailey

Teacher

Mount Hope Childcare

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Sandra Ashe, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Child Inc.

I love working with preschoolers. They are at an age where they are still curious about the world around them. They are also developing their social skills. I feel it's essential to guide them toward becoming independent adults, and it starts when they are young.

This program has helped me keep my bills paid and not have to get multiple jobs. Economic prices have risen, but our paychecks have not. I've had to cut many corners to survive, and this program has significantly helped.

I was in Head Start back in 1965. One of the first pilot programs. I graduated high school and went back and got my associate's degree. I then went back to teach what I love. Not many can say that.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Sandra Ashe

Teacher's Assistant

Child Inc.

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in **strong support** for House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Karen Artegian, and I am an Administrator at Acorn Academy.

I am receiving the CCAP program money for my school-age child. This is helping me keep working every day. Because of this program, I can afford to pay for both food and child care. Without this help, I am significantly struggling. Please keep these programs running.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Karen Artegian

Administrator

Acorn Academy

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in **strong support** of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Aristomedia Tavares, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Aristomedia Tavares Home Day Care.

In this way, you contributed to early childhood education, which is really where the owners of the future begin to prepare. And these programs begin to make good children. I received great support because everything has gone up in price and this program helped me. I am very grateful for everything these programs have done for us providers.

Mi nombre es Aristomedia Tavares y soy proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Aristomedia Tavares Home Day Care.

Porque de esta manera contribuyó a la educación de la primera infancia que es realmente donde se comienzan a preparar los dueños del futuro. Y estos programs comienzan a hacer niños de bien. Recibí un gran soporte porque todo ha subido de precio y esto programa me ayudó.

Que estoy muy agradecida por todo lo que estos programas han hecho por nosotras las proveedoras.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Aristomedia Tavares

Family Child Care Provider

Aristomedia Tavares Home Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is April, and I am a Director at Scituate Early Learning Center.

I am a Director and earn just under \$17 an hour. My team members earn less and love their positions working with children, but they are not living wages. The bonuses have profoundly impacted my Team by helping them get through with rising prices. In my center, the only one who qualifies for the Step Up To Wage\$ is the center's owner. The retention bonus makes everyone who works and loves children equal.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

April

Director

Scituate Early Learning Center

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in **strong support** of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Lauren Andrews, and I am a Teacher at My Learning Tree.

I have been teaching kids since I was in high school. I have a passion for teaching young children and influencing future generations.

As a single mom, finances are always tight. I didn't want to have to give up my career in early childhood, but I couldn't afford to have most of my paycheck go back into the daycare. Luckily, the CCAP pilot has helped me continue pursuing my dreams and career.

I can breathe a little financially and enjoy work without worrying about not being able to afford groceries and other necessities.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Lauren Andrews

Teacher

My Learning Tree

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act. My name is Lauren Anderson, and I am an Administrator at Dr. Daycare.

I have always had a passion for Early Childhood Education. I worked my way from teacher assistant to an administrator while in school. I love being such an essential part of the lives of so many little ones. I now have three children myself and find even more value in this field as I see how much impact my children's teachers have on their lives daily. This is much more than care while parents work. It is education and learning for each of the children here.

The Pandemic retention bonus has helped provide additional support to stay caught up on financial responsibilities.

I do not qualify for the CCAP for Child Care Educators benefit. Initially, it was stated that my income would determine eligibility, which changed for the whole family. This benefit of being available to all parents working in this field would be legitimately life-changing for me and many others. My strong beliefs about the benefits of early education drive me to continue in this field, but with my current family life, most of my pay is used to pay for my children's care. This benefit would show me and others in this field that our work matters as much as it genuinely does.

Parents shouldn't have to weigh the option of quitting their career to stay home solely based on affording childcare, and that is frequently the choice many face, including myself. I am glad so many of my coworkers have benefited from this, and I hope it continues, but I can't help but feel penalized for my spouse's income because of this. My work in this field matters just as much as my coworkers. The benefit should be available to everyone, regardless of income status. Eligibility contributing to a person's working hours, such as full-time or part-time, would make sense, but connecting it to income compares family situations instead of proving the value of our work. I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Lauren Anderson

Administrator

Dr. Daycare

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Diana Alves, and I am a Teacher at Creative Early Learning Center.

I've been a preschool teacher at this center for 4 years. I really enjoy working, and educating my little friends every day is a new adventure, and I would like to continue being part of such a fantastic job force.

The pandemic retention bonus program is an excellent incentive and has greatly helped my finances. In the current circumstances is hard to survive when the cost of living is so expensive, and the money that I currently making is not enough to have a decent life.

Even if I love working with kids, it is not always profitable financially. I'm sure if this program ends this year, I'll be forced to quit my job and look for other venues that pay more. I don't think this industry is going to last for much longer. In my center, we have employees who don't last even a week, and they say that if they work somewhere else, they will get paid more. How can we move forward like this? We can't.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Diana Alves

Teacher

Creative Early Learning Center

April 30, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support for House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Maria Alvarez, and I am a Teacher at Woonsocket Head Start. I started working as a teacher aide as a young mother then moved up to a teacher assistant. Through the years, I continued my education while I worked in the program, allowing me flexibility to be able to work and study. I also was able to graduate with my associate degree in early childhood in 2017. I decided to continue my education in this field and now I'm almost done completing my bachelor degree in elementary and early childhood education. It has opened new doors for me and my family. I am an early childhood educator because I feel the children need to learn and have a head start to their learning process as they learn and grow and develop these important relationships and developmental skills in their lives. I also feel having that positive relationship with the children, parents and families will help to keep that transition smooth to move forward for the future knowing that they are prepared with the skills for elementary school readiness. When I hear one of my past students was student of the month that really speaks for what early childhood education can do for us and the community.

These programs have helped me and supported me through many times in my career and life. They have helped me and my family to grow financially at my home and basic needs.

I would like to share that thanks to these programs, a lot of early childhood educators are doing well as they are getting by day by day in their lives. They are able to continue their careers as they have been doing for many years. Some are able to work and have a load off their shoulders to care for their own families at home. Some are able to provide for their families with their basic needs without having to worry about where their next meal will come, paying for a bill or paying a student loan.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Maria Alvarez

Teacher Woonsocket Head Start

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support for House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Shauna Adams, and I am an Administrator at Dr. Day Care.

I am an early childhood educator because I am genuinely passionate about child care and education.

The programs have helped me and my staff financially because childhood education is severely underpaid. The bonus helps keep us afloat.

Being that educators are severely underpaid, this would eliminate an incentive for people to want to perform jobs in this field!

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Shauna Adams

Administrator

Dr. Day Care

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Kerrilynn Baker, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at CHILD INC.

I love what I do and making an impact on young children's lives, who are simply low income or even gone through trauma. My job, I feel, is thankless but appreciated at the same time.

Fortunately, there isn't enough money in the field, and many people venture into other workforces because, economically, people need to make more money.

The pandemic retention and Wage\$ grants helped me stay where I am and meet my bills. People in this field need to make a living to continue enjoying what we do and staying in the field we love.

Early educators are needed to make a difference in these young lives. We are the most overworked and underpaid, yet so necessary for the workforce in these children.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Kerrilynn Baker

Teacher's Assistant

CHILD INC

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Victoria Ballou, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare North Providence.

These programs have been a significant financial help to my life. I have been able to bring small amounts of supplies to my classroom to help keep my kids engaged in their learning and play.

These programs have been an enormous help, and I don't want them to go away

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Victoria Ballou

Teacher

Dr. Daycare North Providence

April 30, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in **strong support** for House Bill 7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Richard Mailloux, and I am part of the School Age Staff at Child Care Plus.

This position I currently work in helps children to learn and grow outside the home.

The Pandemic Retention Bonus helps with oil, electricity, and the high cost of food that I would not be able to afford otherwise.

Please keep the retention bonus coming. The extra money is a great help with expenses.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Richard Mailloux

School Age Staff

Child Care Plus

April 30, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support for House Bill 7251 (Donovan), the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

My name is Emily Vaccaro, and I am a Teacher at Rogers Williams Daycare Center.

We need more educated early childhood teachers. With this being said, we go through training (and some of us go through schooling), sometimes more than or equal to other types of educators. However, other educators receive much better pay. We sometimes care for the children in our care more than their parents, as parents have to work to support their own families, but we can't sit in the same place; our pay is insulting.

The programs only help in the moment. It is starting not to make it worth staying in the field.

Many early education teachers can no longer afford to stay in the career they love because they can't afford to support themselves. Some are also unwilling to stay because of the demands put on us. We are burnt out.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Emily Vaccaro

Teacher

Roger Williams Daycare Center