

April 30, 2024
Jacqueline Guzman
Assistant Teacher

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251 the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

My name is Jackie. I'm advocating for the Early Educators Compensation Stabilization Act.

I'm advocating because it does help us as teachers that don't get paid enough. By getting these fundings it helps us pay extra bills or anything we're backed up on. It helps us in a lot of ways.

I chose to work in the ECE fields because my mom was a home licensed daycare provider and then I took over when she passed. I just wanted to come in the center instead of staying at home.

Some challenges that I faced working in childhood education is we don't get paid enough for the stuff we have to do and deal with sometimes.

This supplement has helped me with certain things that I had to catch up on and put some into savings just because we don't know what stuff could happen. Some of us get paid and We live paycheck to paycheck, so sometimes having that extra money helps with something else.

It's fun and it's good, but if you don't, if you're not here to experience. They really wouldn't know what it is it about and being around children and educating them is amazing, but we don't get enough support by certain people that does this field and has to love the field in order to stay here.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act**.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Guzman

April 30, 2024
Daisy Garcia
Lead Teacher

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Hi, my name is Daisy Garcia. I'm the lead teacher of Little Explorers, and I've been in the field for 20 years. I am advocating for the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

I am advocating for the Early Childhood funding because it helped the educators to push forward for the education. It helped with all school books, any material for our school funding for our Early Childhood.

My name is Daisy Garcia. I been on the field for 20 years. I enjoy teaching, interacting with the children, enjoy their smile, their growth development. Also is very challenging to teach kids with behaviors, I still enjoy every smile that they come not knowing what they struggling. It teaches how to motivate and continue growing to help them establish an early education for their future.

The challenge that we face as working in the childhood is trying to communicate with our parents. Have them to commit with us and work with their children and salvage what are their needs. Also lack of recognitions and values.

It has helped me to motivate to continue my education, before I didn't want to bother with education and they help me a lot in the education. Also, it's been a challenge in earning of my CDA first. Also working on all my credit cards and continue to work working towards my bachelors.

I feel that we do the same as a public teacher. We have the same potential as they do. Probably a little more work with challenging, but is we do the same job as they do. And also to take us as we value as them and I work on our pay that we get low pay. We should be able to challenge even some people think that we are babysitting. We are not. We are early childhood educators.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Daisy Garcia

April 30, 2024
Yairys Natera
Lead Tacher

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

My name is Yairys Natera. I am a lead teacher, and I support the Early Education Compensation Stabilization Act.

The first thing is about our salaries. We make a minimal salary and would like support in advocating for financial assistance. I advocate for this financial assistance because financially, and economically, it would be of great help to us. I am in favor of and advocating for early childhood funding because it will be a relief to each of us financially.

To talk about myself personally, for 3 years, I have been working in the field of Early Child Care. The first time I started working, it was a challenge because I did not have so much knowledge, and I knew that this program was going to help me in a financial way to be able to cover my expenses as a student. Personally, not only has this affected me or can help me in relation to the payment, but also the love for children has kept me constantly improving myself in this area, which will open more doors for me to obtain the necessary and effective tools to personally have the ability to acquire the knowledge, but also to carry it out in my children in the classroom.

The impact on my students has been to improve the quality for them in the classroom. I want to have more knowledge, interact with them, and acquire goals in the classroom. To be able to connect with them directly and indirectly in a fun, interactive way. So, I can have the tools of psychomotor development in each of the children, because I have understood that each child works and develops at a different pace and that challenges me as a teacher, to continue acquiring knowledge to be able to work and supply in each of their needs.

I would like for them to treat us equally as a teacher, in collaboration with funding, to be able to have and establish an equitable level in each of the teachers, regardless of the field in which they are developing, in order to carry out effective and positive education in each of the children. This will allow us, as educators, not to feel the difference between the educational levels we can acquire but to treat us equally in each of the corresponding areas.

One thing I would like to add is that in this field, we are constantly challenged to improve our quality, not only professionally but also with the children in the classroom, and that is something I would like to see taken into consideration on the Rhode Island level where every single educator can get and acquire equal help in the fields.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Yairys Natera

April 30, 2024
Zangya Roberts
Teacher Assistant

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Hi, my name is Zangya Roberts and I am the teacher assistant in a state pre-K classroom.

And I am advocating for the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

I am advocating for wages and Step Up to Wage\$ because ever since we have received the compensation we have, I have been able to better myself and set more goals in my own personal life, and I'm just seeking to be a better teacher.

I come from a background of educators. My mom is a teacher. And when I was growing up, I would always have questions. Questions would get me in trouble. I always had questions, but my moments and an educator always explained and took the time to explain the "why" questions. And I love seeing that in kids as they grow up and they have curiosity just like me. I love learning about the interests that they have.

Challenges include the low wages and keeping, just like me, keeping teachers that are good quality teachers. You know, retain them in the field. Often they find something, another career, something that they found where they could make more money. So you know, just low wages, retaining quality teachers.

I have been able to supply stuff for my school with the wages, the Step Up to WAGE\$. And just provide a better quality for my family, like when it comes to goals and providing them like a better life or even opportunities that I couldn't afford before, I've been able to supply with Step Up to WAGE\$.

It's growing, and it's changing, and as changes come, growth happens. You also have to, as a teacher, better yourself and I think it's a good investment just to understand what's going on with the children. Just to understand the changes that they're experiencing. So it's good to like reassess what's going on and where should we put the funds. But it's good to want to better myself. And I want to go to school. It's good, you know, for every teacher to feel that they have the support.

Thank you. A big thank you to everybody who put in the effort, you know? You feel heard. You feel like seen, you feel like people do see what I'm doing as a teacher and we feel valued. You know, it's not just babysitting so I just thank you very much for all that you do.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Zangya Roberts

April 30, 2024
Ashima Pierre
Educational Coordinator

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

My name is Ashima Pierre, and I work at beautiful beginnings as the educational coordinator. And I am advocating for the early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

So I'm advocating for early childhood. Funding because I feel like it is a necessary need. Early education, as we see. Is very important as far as children's development children's. Growth as far as like children being. Able to. Maneuver and society with other peers. Seat in the long run as they get older, we see how it affects them as. They're in school. As they're in the working place just for children to be exposed to it. Education is very important. So because that is very important. We need the people there to educate the children to care for these children. This is not an easy feel to be in. It's a rewarding field to be in because everybody loves children. But you know, it comes with a lot of stress. It comes with a lot on your shoulders so. I think this act and being able to. Compensate the teachers for being in. This field and doing. More and having them go above and beyond also. Helps them to actually want to stay here and to actually put in their best foot forward and do even more.

Some of the stresses and the challenges that we face. Could be anywhere between from, like children's behaviors. From families also being overwhelmed, being overstressed. As well. Sometimes we're here with multiple children. We're some parents might have just one or two, maybe three children at home we have. Maybe 678? In a classroom, some teachers have 10 by themselves and. The classroom so that can actually, you know, be a lot new having all. Those kids, and you're just by yourself, and they're pulling you every which way and everywhere. Then you have your own home stresses to deal with. And that also, even though you try to, you know. Leave everything at the door coming in. Sometimes it's a little difficult. You know, if bills are behind, if your own kids are going through things as much. As you try to put it in the back burner. Sometimes you know it does come out in the forefront so.

My ECE story actually started when I was actually pretty young as well I am the youngest of seven. I'm #7. I am the aunt that grew up with her nieces and nephews. And of course, I was the one always watching all the nieces and nephews. So as you got older, it was just easy for me to just take care of other people's kids, because that's just what I grew up doing. My godmother herself had a home daycare and when I turned around like 14 or 15, I was able to part time work after school with her and then my sister had her own daycare and then

just throughout the years in college working at the campus daycares and doing the school programs and working with community youth based centers. By the time I graduated college, it was like I've come into this field. I found Beautiful Beginnings; I was hired to do their summer program and I've just been here since.

It was a tremendous help. It definitely gave me a boost of confidence as far as my bills are getting paid and it kind of gives me a sense of self worth and a sense of "I'm actually doing all this work and it's actually being recognized, I went to school for a reason." I have a bachelors for a reason and it's kind of giving me the UMPH to feel like, OK. Now I should be I am where I am. This is what it pays out to be. It kind of gives you the feeling that you didn't go to school for no reason. You are actually using your degree and you're actually getting paid and compensated for going through those four years plus of actually getting the education to actually be equipped to be in your field.

The step up to wages has impacted the students because actually it's Helped relieve a lot of the stress, especially after coming from a pandemic and then now we're in a height of inflation. You tried to come into work leaving everything in the back burner. But sometimes it's like if your bills are past due and you're getting calls and you're being reminded constantly that you know you're late on this bill or you know rent is due tomorrow. It does kind of overshadow some things. So when we got the step up to wages, it kind of gave a sense of relief. Whereas OK, I'm not behind this month. I got a couple. I have a little bit more, you know, funding that can leave me over to a couple more months or to pay off some debt and pay off some bills. So when it relieves that stress a little bit more, happier. Just more focused in the classroom, focused on the children and then the children also feels the sigh of relief mine as well. They see you're a little bit more happier; they see the changes in your behavior. You're a little bit more positive, so it's definitely like energy is reciprocal. When you're like "I can breathe," the kids are kind of like, "we can breathe."

I would like the state legislators to know that this is an important field to be in and it's not just for the people who have money, it's not just for people who have the means or the luxury to just send their kids off to daycare. It actually is a necessity. It actually helps build those structures that kids need to be in school. For example, when you just have a kid go straight into kindergarten and they don't have the essential beginning tools, they don't know how to sit. They don't know how to focus on an activity one at a time, Or don't even know their name. It's kind of like there's some, but they're expected to know that it's when they come right into kindergarten. It's kind of like, well, where are they going to learn it from? Parents try the best that they can but they can only do what they can do with what they've already been taught. With, the parent isn't equipped to or has the ability or capability to show their child how to write their name or how to sit and focus or how to play with others. Where else would they learn it if they do not come to a childhood center?

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act**.

Sincerely,

Ashima Pierre

April 30, 2024
Lenny Arias
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

He sentido un reconocimiento a mi esfuerzo de estudiar después de 12 horas de jornada laboral con los niños. Quizá sea importante tomar el número de créditos acumulados durante el tiempo estudiado y no solamente cuando ha obtenido un diploma. Así alcanzaríamos un mejor incentivo. anima a otras personas del campo a estudiar y adquirir conocimientos para ofrecer un mejor servicio este fondo nos ayuda a tener fondos para emergencias de pago de utilidades.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Lenny Arias

April 30, 2024
Beatriz Burgos
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Wages help me a lot, I felt appreciated for the hard work that I been doing every day. Also, wages encourage me to pursuit my education. I am very grateful with this program! Everybody in this center is continue their education and I can tell is because of wages.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Beatriz Burgos

April 30, 2024
Annie Arias
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It very useful and helpful because it's been really hard financially so the program helped me a lot to pay bills and buy things I need for my home. It's important because we are one of the lowest pay in the community and this wages grant really help us.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Annie Arias

April 30, 2024

Shayla Perry

In support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It has been so helpful to me and it means so much to get financial support, It has been so helpful to me and has made it easier to save money.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Shayla Perry

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for Representatives Susan Donovan and Sandra Cano's **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act**.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Tell us your story: Share a little about yourself. How have these programs made an impact for you, the children in your classroom, and the Early Childhood Education Field? My name is Maria Alvarez. I work for 22 years in Woonsocket Head start Program. I have obtained my associate degree in early childhood and bachelor's degree in elementary/early childhood education. These programs have made a huge impact on me as a teacher for so many years getting paid a small salary it's hard and difficult to get through our needs every day. It also is hard and difficult for us as teachers to help the children in need in many ways as get materials needed in the classroom. It also has help me pay some of my student loans to help me financially. I really appreciate and all the support these programs have help me and my family. Now a days, we need to basically get through paycheck to paycheck to survive in this country. I feel teachers need to be supported more in the future. Sometimes it's hard and difficult to many of us to find a way to live without thinking about the things that matter most in this field and that's to help our students and parents to thrive in the future. Parents and families' needs are valuable to teachers to maintain a stable and healthy relationship in which they can work together and provide the best education possible to their children. I would encourage to continue these programs for teachers, parents and children in the future. Thank you!

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act**.

Printed Name: Maria Alvarez _____ Date: 4/30/2024

Signature: *Maria Alvarez*

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for Representatives Susan Donovan and Sandra Cano's Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGES national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Tell us your story. Share a little about yourself. How have these programs made an impact for you, the children in your classroom, and the Early Childhood Education Field?

Soy Provedora de Ciudad infantil en
El Habor
La ayuda economica que nos permite llegar
de veces a la mejor manera
de poder
tener muchos programas abiertos
Y poder brindar apoyo a las familias
que trabajan
Es necesario seguir compensando a las
proveedoras
de Ciudad infantil para seguir con nuestro
trabajo

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

Printed Name: Emma Vile Date: 04-30-24

Signature:

Emma Vile

My name is Laura Liddle and I am the owner and director of Ocean State Kidz Club. I am advocating for the Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act. I have been in the childcare field my entire life as a student, volunteer, staff director, and now owner.

It is extremely important to shed light on the current challenges and hardships of working in early childhood education.

The hourly wages staff are receiving are not comparable to making a living. Never mind a decent living. Currently, all of our staff have second or third jobs just to make ends meet. Being an educator in the childcare field is a STRUGGLE!

The retention bonuses have been helping in retaining staff for at least a year or two. It has helped staff pay their bills on time and be able to continue to work at our center. Unfortunately it was not enough as two lead staff have moved onto the healthcare field with greater wages and sign on bonuses. I can't imagine what is going to happen if we do not receive the extra support and funding to keep this program going.

Receiving STEP UP wages allowed us to pay our staff Christmas bonuses and give small raises. It is important educators are being compensated for their education, this is exactly what the STEP UP WAGES program provides. Staff with Bachelor degrees are making \$15 to \$17 an hour, if that. How can we expect someone coming out of college with a Bachelors degree to want to be employed for less than \$16 per hour?

If we don't support educators in the field, when working families need care, there will not be enough high quality centers available and your child may have 2 or 3 teachers within a year due to the high turnover rate.

I can't imagine being a new mother and bringing my child to an early learning center and each month a new staff member is caring for my child. This is detrimental to the child's growth and development. Not to mention this is already happening in centers.

The childcare sector needs your help and support. It is extremely difficult to maintain a high quality program and high quality staff if the average hourly rate is \$14 to \$15 per hour.

Please consider and pass the compensation act, our livelihood depends on this!

--

Laura Liddle

April 30, 2024
Shalee Conceicao
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The wage supplement helped me to get my license and buy a car to get me to and from work because taking the bus was not it. Early educators are always forgotten about and underpaid.

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Sincerely,

Shalee Conceicao

April 30, 2024
Roshona Perry
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It has helped me pay my bills and provide for my child in ways that I was struggling to do so before this program. As an early childhood educator our job is very important, and it often goes unnoticed of all the things we do. We deserve to be paid for our education and the work we put in both in and outside of work.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Roshona Perry

April 30, 2024
Samantha Corrigan
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251,, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

This program has helped me pay me meet me pay my bills and save some money. I think this program is a great incentive for early educators who love their jobs and want to be able to pay their bills and help them get ahead.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Samantha Corrigan

April 30, 2024
Samantha Corrigan
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

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Sincerely,

Samantha Corrigan

April 30, 2024
Nina Ortiz
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It definitely was helpful, meaningful and a relief.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Nina Ortiz

April 30, 2024
Rachael Pina
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The supplements have helped me in many ways and makes me feel appreciated. I have worked in my current program for 23 years, the supplement helps me with my everyday expenses and I hope it continues, life is expensive. Teachers are very under paid; we take care of people's children and I feel the supplement proves appreciation!!

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Rachael Pina

April 30, 2024
Robert Halley
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

This is a low paying field all around - not just for in-classroom teachers. Most administrators have spent many, many years inside a classroom without any kind of supplement program. Administrators are also very likely to have a degree, having devoted a decent amount of time to the field. Excluding directors, assistant directors, education coordinators, etc., feels like an insult to those who have worked hard to build up their career. Especially since those individuals have worked (and in many cases, continue to work) in classrooms during low-staffing situations. I think the Wage\$ Supplement Program is both a reward and an incentive for early childhood educators. A reward for the hard work that people with qualifications have put in, and an incentive for all of them to strive for more. Any and all funding that goes to teachers is extremely important. The fact that a lead teacher with a bachelor's degree can qualify for Medicaid based on how little they make is insane.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Robert Halley

April 30, 2024
Omaris Maria
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

You are doing a great job with this, your project helps me to get better and enthusiastic and confident that you will always in our sides. Yes, it should continue because always when I am more struggling I receive helps from you guys. We are really concerned about the future of our daycare, we try at least in the personal I try to get the best for my children but everyday everything gets worse and worse, sometimes I feel so tiredly to get paid all the bills on time, each month changes highly . I don't exactly what are we going to do.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Omaris Maria

April 30, 2024
Nuirkys Arias
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

This program has helped me alot because it took the stress out of my life after paying my school loans and credit cards. Now I'm able to enjoy my students more and be more present and happier and not have to worry about money. Yes, absolutely because you will be helping so many teachers in need that love working with kids but don't get paid enough to cover their bills and are not able to give their 100% every day. Resources of how this program can impact a teacher's life.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Nuirkys Arias

April 30, 2024
Kristin Silva
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Getting this supplement has shown me how important I really am as being a teacher. I may not make as much as I deserve but it's still so rewarding watching these children grow because of all my help. If this program continues it will continue to help other teachers be more motivated to further their education. This is to help teachers feel more appreciated. I'm currently going to school and other teachers want to see that going to school won't be a waste of their time. There is huge shortage and turnover with teachers coming and going because the pay rate isn't the amount it should be.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Kristin Silva

April 30, 2024
Madelein Gutierrez
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

I feel that the payment of our salary does not adjust to the economic crisis and the daycares do not pay well with the excuse of the low registered population, in the end we continue to work too much for a minimum or basic salary. In this case, the aid allows us to stay afloat in our profession.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Madelein Gutierrez

April 30, 2024
Maria Feliz
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251 the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The supplement has financially benefited me in being able to play my household bills. It has ease the stress of worrying. When an educator is able to focus on her classroom, children learn more. The wage has helped lessen the load I carry economically. The importance of the wage has helped me feel valuable. This is a field that is not praised as much and a lot is demanded from educators and home daycare providers. This wage has helped me pause reflect and know that it's not always the money, but incentives does help.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Maria Feliz

April 30, 2024
Maribel Carrasco
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It has help me with my bills, and saving.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Maribel Carrasco

April 30, 2024
Kimberley Pete
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The supplement has helped me tremendously. It allows me to help me and my family financially feel more secure. WAGE\$ needs faster service and faster dispensing of the funds. It is a very big help financially. It is definitely needed in these financially challenging times.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Kimberley Pete

April 30, 2024
Jessica Wildt
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

This supplement has benefited me greatly. As we all know, early childhood teachers are grossly underpaid. This time around I was able to catch on to my electric bill (which was about to be turned off) and pay my car payment without having to worry about putting food on the table. This supplement helps with basic necessities. I am so grateful for it. This wage supplement is detrimental for Early Childhood Teachers. We do this job because we love children, and we love the field but unfortunately, we get treated as glorified babysitters even though we are expected to do monthly PD and have a degree in Early Childhood. The field is growing and getting more and more respect everyday, but the wages need to grow with the field as well. Higher wages equal more quality teachers for these young minds.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Jessica Wildt

April 30, 2024
Jillian Cinquantini
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251 the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Life is beautiful, life can be messy, life can be complicated at any part or point without warning. I cannot explain how instrumental having this wage supplement and many like it has impacted my life. When I say my life, I want to acknowledge my family. We struggle as humans to make things work and as many times as I'd like to think that's exactly what I did and always strive to do, it's not the reality or the realm of this cycle and all the unforeseen objects and obstacles that come my way. Thank you with all of my heart. Not only did you help me, my family but you helped my employers and the families that we serve. We had two matriarch of our family pass away almost back to back. Nothing prepared us for this. This also helped a bit.

And my eldest son was able to have a deposit on his college tuition. I think that this supplement helps us find balance in many ways and also offers individuals incentive.

I think this program should be given to others who agree to participate in certain activities or events and or be required to complete x amount of volunteer hrs to give back to the mission and the works of others.

Full wrap around investment.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Jillian Cinquantini

April 30, 2024
Hailey L'Heureux
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

I need every penny from these WAGE\$ checks and I appreciate them so much. Where I struggle, is not being allowed taxes taken out prior to receiving the check. If we could opt for taxes to be deducted prior to receiving the check I would be able to distribute the funds better to meet my financial needs and not feel stressed to save them so I have money to pay back once I file my taxes....Yes!!! What a great opportunity to help motivate for higher education. I would like to share how motivating it is to be recognized for my efforts in expanding my education and to be supported financially. Educators do not make nearly enough as they should for playing such an important role in society. It is time we have a livable wage and be recognized for our time, efforts, and education background!

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Hailey L'Heureux

April 30, 2024
Jennie Fiano
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It defiantly benefits people and many different ways and it makes a huge impact on peoples lives.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Jennie Fiano

April 30, 2024
Jennifer Medeiros
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

This money was so important to me. It helped me financially and I would like to continue to earn extra income to better myself and family's lives. Rewards come at a minimum now a days because everything is so expensive. I want my family to be able to do things that they enjoy without the financial burdens.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Jennifer Medeiros

April 30, 2024
Jennifer Murray
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The supplemental benefits have helped me so much. I honestly don't know how I can make ends meet without the extra money. More importantly, the children I work with need us. I've been in the same job for five years, the teachers I work with and I work as a team and we are dedicated to providing a safe place for the children we support many of whom have serious issues going on in their lives. The children we love and work with need us! Many staff persons leave our organization for higher wages at places such as McDonalds. It takes time to learn how to work with and support preschool children — the patience, depth of knowledge and experience are not easy to come by and the teachers need the safety of a higher pay wage to hang in. Too much turnover really affects the children and the families we support. This wage supplement has helped me continue in my current occupation which means a lot to me and hopefully for the children I work with and their families. The supplement has helped me relax a little and have enough money for inevitable emergencies along with day to day expenses.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Jennifer Murray

April 30, 2024
Jenny Santana
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

I personally think that this has been a great help to early childhood educators because it shows that we are appreciate. Early childhood educators have been forgotten for a long time and underpaid for the work that we do. I am grateful that they starting to recognize all of the hard work that we put to bring the best care and education for our little ones. Thank you so much. This supplement can help some of the stress that comes from not having a making enough money to pay for the basic expenses that we have.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Jenny Santana

April 30, 2024
Jessica Goodrich
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It helped me pay back loans. Continuing doing it would help a lot of people. Helps financially, I feel like I can stay in the field because of the help.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Jessica Goodrich

April 30, 2024
Briana Assante
WAGE\$ Coordinator

Dear House Finance Committee,

My name is Briana Assante. I am the Coordinator of the Step Up To Wage\$ RI Pilot program at The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children and I am here in support of *Representative Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.*

I have had the privilege of speaking with hundreds of early childhood educators throughout the implementation of the Step Up to Wage\$ RI pilot program. They share the love they have for this field and for the children in their care. They also tell me of their struggles making ends meet while staying in the field.

Rhode Island Early childhood Educators are currently facing below poverty wages. Most do not have the luxury of taking sick time or receiving other "traditional" benefits. Many of our early childhood educators struggle with having reliable transportation, paying medical bills, keeping a roof over their head, or providing food for their families. When they are not working or caring for their own families, they spend their time seeking professional development trainings or attending college so they can better themselves and to provide better quality education. As you read through the testimonies we've shared with you, you will see Early Childhood Educators are strong, resilient, educated individuals who deserve respect and compensation for the work they do.

The Step Up To WAGE\$ program not only offers much needed supports for educators but it provides piece of mind for employers and improves quality of care for the children in the classrooms. Built into the Step Up To Wage\$ program is an educators' commitment to their educational growth and to their center. Educators will only receive a wage supplement if they meet specific requirements. Educators must consistently care for children in their classroom per each commitment period of 6 months, have a current hourly wage at or below \$23, and they must have proof of early childhood education knowledge in the form of a CDA certificate or college credits. employers or family childcare providers are required to participate in Brightstars and accept CCAP.

Step Up to Wage\$ has helped child care programs reduce turnover. The average retention rate of those who were awarded Wage\$ was 97.8% compared to national retention rates of 60%-80%. Of the few folks who did not remain in their place of employment, most either left because of personal family needs or the need to find a job that provides them with medical benefits.

In the short time that the Step Up To WAGE\$ application was open, we had over 600 educators apply with 191 educators currently on our waitlist.

The funds for Step Up to Wage\$ have been depleted. We need your help to continue to provide this support. We've created the infrastructure for this program, and we've seen the difference it can make for the educators, employers and children in their classrooms.

We need to continue to support our early childhood educators so they can focus on educating and caring for the children of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,
Briana Assante

April 30, 2024
Bethany Bucolo
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Step Up to Wages has allowed me to be less stressed out about financial matters (medical, savings, bills, ect). Not having these issues to deal with makes me a better teacher because I'm more present without as many worries to think about. My co workers are also in better spirits and it has helped the morale of working in child care in general. As previously mentioned- because of the Supplement Program I was able to start a savings account and pay off a medical bill that was hanging over my head . Most of the teachers I work with live paycheck to paycheck and unexpected financial issues have a great impact on us/them. Many people are leaving the Many of us who work in this field are single and live paycheck to paycheck. A financial emergency puts us in debt and it's almost impossible to catch up. Because of the wage supplements we are able to "get ahead" a bit or pay off debt. Not one person that I work with that has received any supplement has ever spent it frivolously- not because they don't deserve to, but because they can't afford to.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Bethany Bucolo

April 30, 2024
Celeste F. Thomason
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The biggest support was helping catching up on my utilities, rent and other bills. I appreciated the financial help and hope that from time to time financial support continues. It does relief some of the financial burden that often leads to increase stressed. It felt good to be supported in this way. It felt like a rock was lifted. My heart felt good! I am very grateful and hope this kind of support continues. Thank You so much.

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

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Sincerely,

Celeste F. Thomason

April 30, 2024
Chelsea Roy
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

The Step Up to Wage grant has been EXTREMELY beneficial to me and my family which consists of my 5 year old daughter and husband. The inflation due to rises of cost of food, gas, and living have been brutal. Spending over \$200 at the grocery store is almost half my check. I have felt at ease knowing I have a little bit of cushion to pay the bills, our mortgage, and not have to worry about if we can buy food this week or we have to use it on the water bill. I hope this grant can continue for others that did not get accepted within the first round. Something needs to be done by the state of Rhode Island to help the centers around it to be able to pay the staff a decent pay. \$18 plus is an acceptable rate for someone with an education in Early Childhood Education with a yearly raise. All these centers are in need of more staff. We are drowning over here because nobody wants to work a not so easy job for minimum wage. Yes, absolutely many people who have applied for this grant have been underpaid for so many years. So even though the amount of money is nice. It still is way less than if the person was making the proper rate of pay from the start. 18-20\$ + an hour for taking care of these children in my care! I have my associates degree in early childhood education also 24 hours a year of basic training. Please advocate for all these centers that are so under paid in the field! We are taking care of your loved ones! Your babies! Your whole world! Wouldn't you want qualified, educated staff doing so? Instead of some random person you hire? Early Childhood Programs need help! This program has given people incentive to stay in the field and stay at their current job!

The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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Sincerely,

Chelsea Roy

April 30, 2024
Cherish Wright
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

I've used a portion of the WAGES money towards buying a new car, which will help my family out exponentially, and then another portion to pay off a credit card and help climb out of debt. To my life, this has helped me tremendously. I work very hard and sometimes it feels like I'm running in place, especially financially. Being able to relieve some of that stress has been an incredible boon to my life. Early Educators are not paid fairly. The work we do is important, imperative for children, their families and the community as a whole. We do more than provide child care, we are the first school experience your children will have. We set the tone, the expectations, the experiences of school for the rest of your child's life. While we deserve to be paid on par with more traditional schools, programs like Step Up to WAGES helps us to feel seen and appreciated. Is there a better gift than that?

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Cherish Wright

April 30, 2024
Christine Melesko
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It was the very benefited for me I could fixed something in my day care, I hope you can continue with the funds.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Chritine Melesko

April 30, 2024
Confesora Cordero
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

It has helped me in many aspects of my life. It has helped me pay for school and the health needs of my family. I think that it has been a big help and has had a big impact for daycares and the providers now that the cost of life has become very expensive and it has been a big resource. The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

This act will also invest \$5 million to continue retention bonuses at \$3,000 per year for some early educators, those who are lower-wage, consistent, frontline child care staff, beyond the projected end date in September 2024 to prevent loss of staff/closure of more classrooms and program.

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Sincerely,

Confesora Cordero

April 30, 2024
Dena Walkinshaw
In Support of H-7251

Dear House Finance,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I am in strong support for **Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

This supplement has helped me to feel a little better about the amount of money I am providing for my family. I love what I do, but unfortunately the wages are not anything close to what we should be making. I could honestly choose many other occupations and be financially "better off." I love this profession and hope that we are going to be better compensated, as we are a very crucial part of child development and economic stability for families and businesses. I feel that without this program we are going to continue to see a decline in staffing in childcare. This allows people to find new education options as well as financial benefits. This was a nice little "token of appreciation" for early educators, especially those who have been doing this for many years. I also hope this is a little incentive for all levels of childcare workers to seek higher education opportunities or even just stay in the field as we know the staffing shortages are very serious.

Our child care providers are essential workers. They are being underpaid and undervalued. They deserve our investment, and it cannot wait. Please support the **Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.**

Sincerely,

Dena Walkinshaw