

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 Stacey Rosa, and I am a Director at Child Care Plus Learning Center.

I am the Director of the Child Care Plus Learning Center. This grant helps with the retention of staff at the Center. We can entice workers to stay more than six months with the promise of a bonus. It also helps supplement salaries because it is difficult to pay our worker's top dollar to care for young children.

The retention bonus has helped us in so many ways. It has allowed my family and I to keep up with the rising food, heat, and electricity costs.

Please keep the retention bonus in place for all childcare centers. Our staff's wages are very low, and it is difficult for us to increase their wages without passing it on to the parents who are also struggling. Thank you!

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

Stacey Rosa

Director

Child Care Plus 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 Victoria Latham, and I am an Administrator at Growing Children of Rhode Island.

I am a 22-year-old director and I love my job and working with children. I did an internship through my high school that allowed me to work with children at the age of 16/17 years old. I love building relationships with the children and families and work so hard to help each and every child at my center learn and grow in the best way I know they can! I also was a TA before, as well as an infant/preschool teacher! Getting to work with children is such a rewarding job and I have loved it ever since I started back in high school!

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

Victoria Latham

Administrator

Growing Children of Rhode Island

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 Ebonee Brown, and I am an After-school Teacher at CCAP.

Providing these funds has supported my family by giving me additional funds that allow me to eat instead of going hungry at night. I've been able to catch up on some of my outstanding credit card bills because I had to max them out in order to cover bills and food. I'm able to work longer hours because of the childcare benefit, in order to earn more money. Thank you so much. You've changed my life and I am now considering staying an early childhood educator and going back to school to achieve my Bachelor's degree in the field.

I am a single mom of two kiddos and a homeowner. Aside from this assistance, my family receives no other assistance because I "make too much," according to the state. But I don't make enough in this field to survive. And without these funds, I would leave.

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

Ebonee Brown

After-school Teacher

CCAP

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 Lillian Brietzke, and I am a Teacher at Sunshine Child Development Center.

I am an early childhood educator because these children are the future. Learning to build social-emotional relationships, building the foundations of math, science, and reading, and caring for them is how we build the society and the future we want to see. Educated citizens begin developing as young as my infant classroom. On top of that, well-staffed childcare centers allow parents to go to work while their children receive care.

The retention bonus has allowed me to further my early childhood education by having a little extra for my schooling. It's so hard to find staff right now, let alone qualified staff, so the bonus allows us to work towards more knowledge and qualifications in the field.

This field is so important. Without early childhood educators and childcare workers, many people wouldn't be able to go to work. Having a "village" isn't as common as it once was, and childcare workers and educators become that village for the families they work with. My families ask me to babysit and ask for my advice and input. They tell me about their struggles with their children and in their lives. We are caregivers to their children. We need to help the field grow, not make it impossible for people to continue their jobs, survive, and pay the bills. Without childcare, the workforce will suffer.

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

Lillian Brietzke

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 Danna Bravo, and I am an Administrator at the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Rhode Island.

I enjoy working with a great group of kids and knowing that we provide a safe place for them to grow and learn.

This is a part-time job, so the additional income helped me to keep my kids in the after-school program and enjoy other positive programs and sports.

I enjoy knowing this program provides excellent futures for kids with a solid foundation. Working for a place that can provide this and trusted adults in a safe, clean establishment makes my job all worth it.

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

Danna Bravo

Administrator

Boys and Girls Club of Northern Rhode Island

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 Blade, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at A Child's University.

I got into early childhood teaching later in life. My own children are grown, and I missed the teaching and gratification you get from the innocence of a young child when they have learned something new.

The retention bonus helped me bring new materials into my preschool classroom for newer learning experiences.

I genuinely enjoy working and seeing the growth of young children each day and the impact I can have on them.

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

Sandra Blade

Teacher's Assistant

A Child's University

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 Indigo Bethea, and I am a Teacher, Owner, and Family Child Care Provider at Indigo's Kids: A Homeschooling Adventure. I am an early childhood educator primarily because I wanted to homeschool my own children. My goal is to give them a world-class education that allows them to navigate the adult world of literacy, mathematics, the sciences, languages, and cultures. Along the way, I realized that I loved teaching young minds and wanted to provide other families with the same opportunities I had given my children. As a result, I now have a school full of emerging readers (we are up to sound blends as of this typing). And that ability extends from my 2-year-old students up to my 4-year-old students. My two children have been excellent peer instructors in helping the younger students understand the joy and value of reading. They are great leaders who help us think about all the forces that make our natural and social world spin.

The pandemic took a significant toll on all of us, and I am no exception. In my case, I went from being married and having a stable income to suddenly becoming a single mother/head of household. I was utterly nervous because I'm well aware of the feminization of poverty, especially as a mother of young children of color. The pandemic bonuses helped me stabilize during this highly turbulent period. Unexpectedly, two of my families went through their own financial (non-divorce) difficulties. I survived that problematic period thanks to the rise in CCAP funds and the pandemic bonus. I do not live above my means; however, without those extra funds, I would have drowned. No doubt about it!

I plan to expand my school to offer more high-quality early education to young students, especially those of color. I want every child in RI starting school already reading, writing, understanding math, and being aware of the rest of the world and its cultural and scientific place. And I will need all the financial and skills to make it happen. I believe this is RI's vision for future generations, right?

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

Indigo Bethea Teacher, Owner, and Family Child Care Provider

Indigo's Kids: A Homeschooling Adventure

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 Bethany Bucolo, and I am a Teacher at Countryside Children's Center.

I have worked in Early Education for about 20 years (I briefly explored other paths, but after my daughter was born, I returned to Daycare.) After deciding this was a career I enjoyed, I went to school for Early Childhood (CCRI). I genuinely enjoy my job and love my "kids" immensely.

The programs above allowed me to have less financial stress. Because of Step Up to Wage\$, I was actually able to save for an emergency. The Retention money makes it easier to provide for my daughter and myself regarding medical matters and clothing for the changing seasons.

The funds we receive are greatly appreciated and needed. Everyone I work with who receives the funds puts the money towards something that is a "need"- not a "want."

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

Bethany Bucolo

Teacher

Countryside Children's 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 Brittany Bergeron, and I am the Director at My Learning Tree.

I have been an early educator since my son was born 6 weeks early. It took a lot for me to put him in daycare when he turned 7 months old, but I knew a family friend working at a center and trusted her. They had an opening a few months later, and I haven't looked back since. My son is now 7 and in 1st grade. I have two other children, who are now 5 and 2, who attend the same school that I have continued to work for for over 7 years.

The CCAP grant helped me pay for childcare for two of my children, especially when I was promoted to director, and my DHS copay went up. Wage\$ ran out of grant money, but I was accepted. The money offered would have helped me move to help my son's healing journey. The retention grant was helpful in allowing me to do extra things for my work kiddos that I otherwise could not afford.

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

Brittany Bergeron

Director

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 Richard Mailloux, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Child Care Plus.

Children in daycare need people who care deeply for them. I care and want the best for these children, as do my coworkers.

This bonus money helps to pay for fuel, oil, electricity, and groceries. Everything is so expensive, and the added money helps so much. Please consider funding these programs again. We need it desperately.

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

Richard Mailloux

Teacher's Assistant

Child Care Plus

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 Gianna Mallette, and I am a Teacher at Early Foundation Academy.

I was always lost on what I wanted to do for a career growing up. I changed majors more times than I can count; the only thing I knew for sure was I wanted to help people/make a difference in someone's life. It wasn't until I had my first child that I realized the ECE field was the path for me. I had my second child during the pandemic while still in school for early childhood education. Working with such young kids, helping them grow and develop skills, and working with different families can be challenging, but it's worth it when you see the smile on the child's face each morning to greet you, or you hear from the families how much they love coming to school.

I have a 6-year-old and a 3-year-old. My 3-year-old attends the preschool program where I currently work. Before this program, I was receiving a childcare voucher. Still, they had implemented a weekly copayment and back pay because the offices had lost my recertification forms and tried to terminate their assistance due to not complying with recertification, which meant that there were weeks on end where I accumulated debt. I don't make a lot of money. Because of that copayment, I would've had to choose between working fewer hours so I could keep my kids home the weeks that I had other big bills due, not paying my electric or rent bill on time, or not working at all, staying home with the kids, and having to apply for even more state assistance like Snap/cash assistance.

Being able to work has made it possible for me to get off of RIW and Snap, and I was very proud to be able to do that, but seeing that childcare alone is expensive, and childcare jobs are highly underpaid and demanding with hours, without the program, I would unfortunately not be able to get by.

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

Gianna Mallette Teacher Early Foundation 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 Nicole Mansi, and I am a Teacher at Bright Beginnings ELC.

An avid lover of children and teaching, and a mom to two young boys. Currently, I am attending school to further my education in early childhood. I work in a center-based preschool, teaching our young generation.

The pandemic retention bonus helped when times were tough. It helped pay bills and supply needs to my family. We don't get paid well to work in early childhood education, but we do it because we love it.

Keeping these programs will help keep workers and hopefully even get more to want to work in the field.

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

Nicole Mansi

Teacher

Bright Beginnings ELC

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 Aimée Salazar Martinez, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Pat Feinstein Child Development Center.

I am an early educator because I love kids and believe they deserve all the good things. I enjoy helping and watching children learn about the world through their experiences across different settings (i.e., the classroom, the park, etc.), primarily through play. I am an early childhood educator because I know firsthand how essential it is for children to access high-quality early childhood to develop crucial skills that will shape their future (i.e., how they do from elementary school to adulthood). The first 5 years of a child's life are some of the most critical years in a person's life -- and I am thankful that families trust me to help their little ones grow into the caring, curious, and adventurous people they can be.

The retention bonuses helped me keep up with the current food, gas, and rent cost increases. Towards the end of the "pandemic period," my housing expenses increased by over 20%. Between Rhode Island Energy hiking up their energy rates and rent in my Providence apartment, I started stretching myself thin - taking babysitting jobs on the side, after work, and on the weekends to afford the higher bills. The retention bonuses made it so that I didn't have to worry about being able to keep the lights on or if I could make the rent on time. After the retention bonuses end, I will probably have to return to working side jobs to keep up with the bills.

I live in a single-income (mine) apartment in Providence, and the only reason I've been able to live in Providence for as long as I have is that my rent is not anywhere as high as most apartments' (my landlord has been considerate!). Please consider funding these programs again, as they keep some of us alive.

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

Aimée Salazar Martinez Teacher Dr. Pat Feinstein 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 Susan Medieros, and I am a Teacher at Appleblossom Preschool.

I have been a childcare teacher for 30 years now. I have taught and cared for infants all the way up to school-age children. I have a very tight financial budget as a widow and semi-retired woman. This retention and other benefits have given me some wiggle room and helped me with medical costs. Please keep these benefits coming to retain qualified, caring teachers for your most important possessions: your children!

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

Susan Medieros

Teacher

Appleblossom Preschool

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 Diane Postoian, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at URI Child Development Center Providence.

I began my career educating children in a Manhattan preschool. I expanded my work to include children from ages 5-18. Now semi-retired, I've returned to my roots as an early childhood teacher's assistant. Being in an assistant capacity allows me to work alongside highly dedicated educators who, without a doubt, appreciate young children's sparkling, always-thinking minds. My continued work with 3-5-year-olds allows me the gift of entering their world of pretend. A short-lived, sacred place where adults must go to understand the whole child. A good teacher will never stop learning from the growing mind of a preschool-age child. I couldn't imagine another place to be at my age.

As a semi-retired individual, I believe that Social Security helps to cover some expenses, but certainly not all of them. The retention bonus was clearly a help with unforeseen medical expenses, for which I am forever grateful.

Supporting and increasing the funding needed to enhance Early Childhood Education is, to me, a given. It is the basis for all the growth children will experience in their schooling in the future. Encouraging individuals to become early childhood educators allows them to cultivate a young mind hungry for experience through their work in a world of play. A young child's mind at work is something you can actually see, whether they are manipulating materials, making a puzzle, slicing an apple, or pretending to fly. They leave their teachers with a gift of joy and a continued desire to teach. However, the field of Early Childhood Education and its teachers need continued respect and support from its government to be taken seriously as a valued, basic beginning to learning.

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

Diana Postoian

Teacher's Assistant URI Child Development Center 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 Gina Porter, and I am a Lead Teacher at a State Pre-K Program.

I'm recently divorced. The Pandemic Retention bonuses have helped me in my new life. These bonuses helped with the unexpected things that came up.

I've been a State PreK teacher for almost 10 years in various early learning centers. While I don't make close to what State PreK leads make in the public school, past parents have told me that their child's Kindergarten teachers are very impressed with how well-prepared children from a State PreK program are. Kindergarten teachers have shared with parents that children from the State PreK program are able to sit in a circle, get in line, have confidence in meeting their hygiene needs, and eat in the cafeteria without needing help to open lunch boxes or food packaging.

While these sound like little things, they are skills that children not in our program take all year to master. Every year, more and more of my parents write me Thank you notes within the first 6 weeks of school for preparing their child so well for Kindergarten. These notes fill me with pride and validation that my work is making a difference.

It would be a massive help if State PreK teachers in early learning centers could get paid what the teachers in State PreK in public schools make. I have a bachelor's degree in ECE and a state certificate, and I only make \$50k a year. A friend of mine has the same qualifications as me and works in the same program, but she is in a public school and makes \$80k. How is this possible? Why such a huge gap? If pay is supposed to be comparable, a \$30k difference is big. Am I valued less because I'm in an early learning center? I shouldn't be because I'm there many days past 3:00pm and not getting paid for it.

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

Gina Porter
Lead Teacher, State Pre-K Program

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 Pollitt, and I work at Countryside Children Center.

I love working with children. It's a joy to watch the children as they realize they can do something on their own. This job also keeps me young and close to my grandchildren living in another state.

The pandemic retention bonus and the Step Up to Wage\$ program have helped keep up with everything as everything is constantly increasing.

It has also allowed me to take a trip with my children without worrying about where the money will come from, as well as not charging a credit card.

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

Erica Pollitt

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 Eva Polanco, and I am an Owner and Family Child Care Provider at Eva Home Day Care.

Children are my life; I live and work for them. I had been babysitting for almost 20 years until my house burned down, and then my mother died. I took a break of nearly 3 years, and this year, I finally managed to get my license again. Please continue these programs.

Mi nombre es Eva Polanco y soy una Dueño y Proveedor de Cuido Infantil Familiar en Eva Home Day Care.

Los niños son mi vida , vivo y trabajo para ellos. Tenía casi 20 años cuidando niños hasta k mi casa se quemó y luego murió mi madre , coji un receso de casi 3 años y ya este año por fin logre obtener mi licencia de nuevo. Por favor continúa con estos programas.

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.**

Eva Polanco

Owner and Family Child Care Provider

Eva 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 Alagracia Polanco, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Learning World Home Day Care.

In the first place, I do this job because I love children. I love seeing how the growth in my care got them ready to enter kindergarten. It is a pleasure to hear the parents say I love your care, but the pay we receive as educators should be better.

As a single parent, I find it hard to do everything by myself sometimes. For this reason, these programs need to continue.

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

Alagracia Polanco

Family Child Care Provider

Learning World 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 J Lea Plante, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Day Care North Providence.

This is a second career for me. I started in retail in 1997 and exited in 2018, feeling like I was not contributing anything to the world. I searched for a new career and began as a preschool lead teacher. I was able to go back to school with the TEACH scholarship and get my BS in early childhood education.

The retention bonus has enabled me to pay off some bills and buy bigger items that I usually couldn't afford.

These programs enable teachers to make a living and pay bills and not feel as if they are always underwater with bills. It is very hard to have a career that you love and feel as if you need a second job to pay the essential bills and be able to afford clothes and the occasional vacation.

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

J Lea Plante

Teacher

Dr. Day Care North 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 Amalia Pineda, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare Learning Center.

Because I love to teach little kids, I have been teaching all my life. I love working with little ones. I have an associate's degree in early childhood because I would like to work in this field. But I do not get paid enough to survive at this time. Everything costs a lot, but I am passionate about my job and work. The bonus we receive helps a lot.

I need this help because I am a single mother.

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

Amalia Pineda

Teacher

Dr. Daycare 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 Meredith Pincince, and I am an Education Coordinator at Tri-County Community Action Agency.

Since Kindergarten, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. At UConn, I stumbled upon their ECE program and absolutely fell in love with the birth to 5 age group. I was lucky to get a job as a teacher assistant at a Head Start program right out of college. From there, I became a lead teacher and now the Education Coordinator. I have been at the same Head Start agency (Tri-County Community Action Agency) for ten years. During that time, I worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, looked into positions elsewhere, and looked into changing fields because of the job's demands and the very low salary. But, what kept me in the early childhood field, especially at Head Start, is knowing that what I'm doing is making a difference. I get to work alongside many other highly qualified staff here for the same reason: to help the children and families who are struggling beyond what we'll ever know and to give them an excellent start to their education. However, being an early childhood educator is an extremely difficult job due to the mental health and social/emotional needs of children. We were on this trajectory even before the COVID-19 pandemic, but unfortunately, the pandemic exacerbated it. Despite that, we can all agree on this: what we do and how we teach during these critical 0-5 years sets children up for success in the future. That's monumental and deserves attention by the general assembly with significantly higher wages.

It's so disheartening to know that teachers everywhere, no matter their age group or grade, are not earning what they deserve. Some of our teachers, with degrees and teaching certifications, are accessing the same social services as our Head Start clients. I think it's lovely that the state has started the CCAP for Childcare workers, but the truth is, ECE workers, like myself, desperately need childcare help even if their household income falls above 300%. My husband and I work full-time at our respective jobs; we live within our means, have two young children, and still cannot pay for childcare. I don't know what we'll do when the Pandemic Retention Bonuses are

eliminated. I know I speak for many other early childhood educators when I say that we are in need of more money and more training to support the growing mental health needs of children and their families so that we can stay at a job we love.

The Pandemic Retention bonuses were pivotal in paying for our childcare (we're over the 300% threshold) and basic needs (the cost of food and gas went up exponentially, along with car and home insurances).

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

Meredith Pincince

Education Coordinator

Tri-County Community Action Agency

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 Rachel Pina, and I am a Teacher and Floater at First Years Learning Center.

I have been teaching toddlers and preschool-age children for 23 years. I have been at the same center all these years and love watching the children learn and grow. I take my job very seriously. I have beautiful relationships with the children, their families, and my coworkers.

As you know, teaching does not pay well, but this extra money has helped me with my bills, and living expenses. I feel teachers or anyone in childcare deserve this help. We work hard and care about what we do. These bonuses make me feel very appreciated!

All the funds should continue. I will always work in childcare, no matter what, but the extra money definitely helps me financially!

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

Rachel Pina

Teacher and Floater

First Years 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 Sondra Medeiros, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at a Preschool and Child Care program.

I love teaching and caring for my students. I've been in childcare for 29 years and would not change a thing. It's a thankless job, not for my bosses but in general. You will not get rich from this job because it is hard for the owners to keep afloat. Getting the retention bonus was so helpful in paying my bills and keeping afloat. I was very grateful to receive the extra income, which was very helpful to so many people. Also, the money that the parents received for childcare was very helpful and needed.

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

Sondra Medeiros

Teacher's Assistant

Preschool and Child Care Program

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 Cheryl Mello, and I am a Teacher at the Head Start Chaffee Site EBCAP.

I have worked with children for 48 years. I do not consider this a “job” but a career I cherish and enjoy. I thrive on working with young children and seeing the progress I helped obtain! I continue working in this field to offer the best positive learning environment and experience. I appreciate all the programs that supported a bit of financial help.

I work hard and actually 2 jobs, so it helped a lot and allowed me to catch up on life responsibilities and purchase materials and supplies for my classroom. I hope that these programs continue.

I work hard to help my children thrive in a diverse society, and it’s my goal and challenge to keep giving all I can to all 18 children in the classroom. I devote my career and time to working 40 hours a day to accommodate each other to learn and develop at their individual level. Our current pay is problematic. It’s tough to make it. As I mentioned, I work 2 jobs, but I’ll never give up on working in the career; it’s my passion.

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

Cheryl Mello

Teacher

Head Start Chaffee Site EBCAP

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 Leah Montiero, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Dr. Daycare Providence.

This is my first year working here at Dr. Daycare in the early childhood care field. I am 18 years old and in my first year of college for early childhood education. I love this job because I am getting experience with preschool-age children and infants and toddlers. I get to learn the different personalities of the children and see how to adapt to each to provide a helpful learning environment and help my lead teacher and other team members with whatever they may need. My goal with school and my career is to become a first-grade teacher. I have always been passionate about it, having teaching run in my family. Both my grandfathers were teachers, and growing up, I admired them.

The program has helped me so much. I am currently expecting my first child in August and am in school. As I mentioned, the program has helped me and my fiancé prepare for our little baby and not have to worry about my school expenses, as I used the \$750 to pay for some things I needed. It was a big help, and I know it will continue to help after my baby. The cost of living is not cheap, and although I love this field, the salary isn't the best.

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

Leah Montiero

Teacher's Assistant

Dr. Daycare 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 Gina Molis, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Smith Hill Early Learning Center State Pre-K.

I have been an Early Educator for 33 years. I genuinely enjoy all aspects of my job; as you all know, teachers wear many hats. It's a joy to educate and play with these little learners.

The Retention Bonus helped with the higher cost of everything. Thank you so much.

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

Gina Molis

Teacher's Assistant

Smith Hill Early Learning Center State Pre-K

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 Jennifer Murray, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at East Bay Community Action Program.

I'm 75 years old and have a bachelor's degree and many years of work experience. I'm grateful to be able to work full-time in a Pre-K program at East Bay Community Action Program. We work with children and families from many walks of life— maybe a 2 doctor family, maybe a homeless family, children in foster care, children living in severe poverty, and many children who have walked to the Texas border from Central America with their very young scared parents and who have somehow miraculously made it to Rhode Island. I see courage every day of my life through the children we support, along with miracles, unfairness, poverty, and racism. We love each child, provide a safe, structured environment for everyone, ensure they get enough to eat while they're at school and celebrate each unique developmental milestone these children master.

Right now, we're short-staffed in our programs, and it's been hard to keep kind, intelligent teachers even with the bonus money bestowed on us. The pay scale in early childhood education is horribly low, and I believe it will be disastrous when the much-needed extra money terminates.

The pandemic retention bonuses and the Step Up to Wage\$ programs helped many of us pay bills, buy necessary things, and, most of all, not having to be afraid of how to make ends meet.

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

Jennifer Murray

Teacher's Assistant

East Bay Community Action Program

April 30th, 2024

To whom it may concern,

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

I am Virginia Najarro, a Family Child Care Provider at Virginia Family Child Care. I desire to help children in their early years, and I know that high-quality education at an early age is very important to have fewer students and successful professionals. Knowing that each of the children I serve has different needs has been the driving force that has motivated me to strive to continue improving each year and offer high-quality care. Although there are other challenges to achieving these objectives, during the pandemic, we have had an unfavorable factor since we have suffered as Suppliers due to a lack of resources and lack of personnel who want to work in this industry and with the high prices of our educational materials and food, which is why the Pandemic Retention Bonus and Wage\$ programs have been vital for our program to continue working. I am very grateful to all the children I serve and my assistant and I for providing us with this valuable help.

Mi nombre es Virginia Najarro y soy proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Virginia Family Child Care. Mi deseo de ayudar a los niños en sus primeros años, sabiendo que la educación de alta calidad a temprana edad es muy importante para tener menos estudiantes y profesionales exitosos. El saber que cada uno de los niños a quienes sirvo tiene diferentes necesidades ha sido el motor que ha motivado a esforzarse para seguir mejorando cada año y ofrecer un cuidado de alta calidad. A pesar que para lograr estos objetivos hay diferentes desafíos, Durante la pandemia hemos tenido un factor desfavorable ya que hemos sufrido como Proveedores por falta de recursos y falta de personal que desee trabajar en esta industria y con los precios altos en nuestros materiales de educación y comida, por eso los programas de Bono de retención pandémica y Wage\$ ha sido vital para que nuestro programa continúe trabajando. Y agradezco en gran manera en nombre de todos los niños a los que sirvo y a mi asistente y a mí que nos suministren estas valiosas ayudas.

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

Virginia Najarro Family Child Care Provider

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 Sharron Needham, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Sandpipers Early Learning Center.

I have been working at sandpipers for 8 years. I love working with preschool-aged children. Please continue these programs, as they greatly help us financially.

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

Sharron Needham

Teacher's Assistant

Sandpipers 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 Amy Nesmith, and I am the Director at New Era Enrichment Academy.

I have been the director for 8 years, working up to 70 hours per week due to Covid and staffing shortages. I am a salaried employee.

The pandemic bonuses have allowed me to catch up on bills that I get behind due to the low pay in this field.

These programs have dramatically helped us as a school by incentivizing us to keep staff with better opportunities or get back staff that had left.

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

Amy Nesmith

Director

New Era Enrichment 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 Jacqueline LaPierre, and I am a Teacher at Kinderart.

I have worked in the field for most of my life and am pleased that my company pays a decent salary. I have always advocated for Early Childhood Educators and would like to continue this pursuit!

With my spouse's support, I am fortunate to continue working in this field. Most teachers don't have access to health care benefits or a fair living wage. My spouse has been the sole provider of those crucial benefits. I have been dedicated to this occupation for over 30 years and love what I do!

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

Jacqueline LaPierre

Teacher

Kinderart

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 Zangya Roberts, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Beautiful Beginnings Child Care.

I know I am destined to be a teacher to provide a safe, nurturing environment where children of different backgrounds feel like they belong and are part of a loving community. They can learn, make mistakes, and be challenged to learn and explore their abilities.

Thanks to Wage\$ and the Pandemic Retention program, I could continue to work in the field I know I have a passion for. Without these programs, I would have to switch to a different field that pays a living wage. I often see job postings in different fields that require less educational requirements at a higher rate than positions in early childhood. Thanks to WAGES, I could supply my own laptop and book for school without sacrificing money from my one-income household.

Like many other teachers, I put in a lot of effort and dedication to be the best I can be. Supporting financial programs that make a difference and reflect how valuable teachers are in the community is worth investing in. It helps the teacher stay in the field for an extended period, serving where it is most needed.

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

Zangya Roberts

Teacher's Assistant

Beautiful Beginnings Child 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 Yuli Reyes, and I am a Teacher, Owner, and Family Child Care Provider at Yuli's Home Daycare. I work with young children because I am excited to give them the attention they need during their initial stage of life and guide them in their first steps.

The Pandemic Retention Bonus has been a great relief for family childcare programs, especially my program, which has not kept track of the number of children that my license capacity allows mostly because parents, in some cases, do not qualify for state aid and cannot afford to pay the weekly fee.

In many aid that has been allocated to suppliers, the same group of suppliers has benefited on more than one occasion with structural improvements in their programs.

Mi nombre es Yuli Reyes y soy maestra, propietaria, y proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Yuli's Home Daycare.

Trabajo con niños pequeños porque me entusiasma darles la atención que ellos necesitan durante su etapa inicial de la vida y guiarlos en sus primeros pasos. Pandemic Retention Bonus a sido de gran alivio para los programas de cuidado infantil familiar, especialmente mi programa que no a mantenido una constancia en el numero de niños que la capacidad de mi licencia me permite. En su Mayoría porque los padres en algunos casos no califican para la ayuda del estado y tampoco pueden asumir el pago de la cuota semanal.

Solo mencionar que en muchas ayuda que han sido destinada para las proveedoras han sido beneficiadas el mismo grupo de proveedores en mas de una ocasión, con mejoras de estructura en sus programas.

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

Yuli Reyes Teacher, Owner, and Family Childcare Provider

Yuli's Home 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 Kelly Rhodehamel, and I am a Teacher and Education Coordinator at Sstarbirth Day Care.

Social and Emotional well being is most nurtured and grown in the first 3 years of life. Children are filled with all the goodness, the innocence, and the wonder that each one of us possesses at our core. To nurture a child and create a safe, secure, loving, and positive environment for them will benefit their future wellbeing which will in turn better their families' lives, future relationships and their communities. I am a teacher because I want to make the world better. I work in a residential facility with children who are reunifying with mothers new to recovery due to substance use disorder. It is important to have respect and use insight and empathy to help a child experience trust, confidence, success and love.

The Pandemic Retention Bonuses have been such a blessing. Working with children is something I am extremely passionate about and proud of. Unfortunately, our profession is undervalued in our society and does not pay well at all. I have been working in the field for about 20 years now and my income does not reflect the skills I have, the value of my time, the cost of living, and the amount of work I do. It has been nice to finally feel some recognition for what a valuable job we have.

Educators and nonprofit organizations are struggling. Many schools and nonprofits are closing. We put so much value and support into our communities and we need you to support us!

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

Kelly Rhodehamel

Teacher and Education Coordinator

Sstarbirth 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 Gaudy Recinos, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Day Care Providence.

It helps all teachers who work with children's needs. The help is very good. I need this help.

Mi nombre es Gaudy Recinos y soy una maestra en Dr. Day Care Providence.

Es una ayuda q todas las maestras q trabajan con niños necesitan. Muy buena las ayudas. Q necesito esta ayuda.

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.**

Gaudy Recinos

Teacher

Dr. Day Care 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 Paula Rebello, and I am a Teacher at Clubhouse Kids.

I have been in childcare for around 24 years. I love my job. I'm an infant teacher most of the time. I get this little tiny baby, and I teach them how to roll over, crawl, stand, walk, talk, and eat in 18 months. The school I work for can hold eight infants, but it's a hard job. Please look at the rewards I have spoken about at the end. Please take a moment to look at our pay. We work hard but don't make enough money to pay bills. I thank all of you for the past grants that keep us working in a job we love.

This year, without these grants, I would not have been able to buy oil or wood pellets to keep my family warm. My husband became unemployed, but the two large grants paid our mortgage so we could keep our home. I was so grateful for this money. Please understand I really don't make enough money to cover bills when my husband is out of work, so when I say this money saved us, it did. I was going to Project Hands Up for food. The grants took so much stress off of us. I love my job, but I don't get medical insurance, so my husband has to be there to cover these things because he knows I love my job. I have gone without many things to keep my job. Please vote these grants back in. It's so hard for families to afford essential items these days

The only other thing I can think of is helping fund some school grants, such as a food program or classroom supplies. One more thing would be items for playgrounds, such as ground coverings or items to play with; these things get expensive. I'm a teacher who loves each child. The way I want someone to treat my own child. Please think of what all of you would want for a child. Please keep all grants for us teachers going. We are molding the future every day.

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

Paula Rebello

Teacher

Clubhouse Kids

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 Jennifer Rathbun, and I am the Director at Joyful Noise, Inc. I am the director of Joyful Noise and an advocate for early childhood education for students, families, and staff members. These incentives help staff retention because childhood care has tripled for us since the pandemic, and the unique needs of students have also been very demanding. It is a lot of work that the entire entity does for students and families, and they deserve righteous pay for all that they do. It is not a glorified babysitting occupation anymore; it is an early learning setting. Our staff work diligently to create a curriculum and pass it along to their staff, students, and families, alongside attending school to better their education and take care of their own families and households. It is a lot for very little compensation. And yet, if it weren't for childcare providers, the foundation of the workforce, then there would not be workers in the fields doing their jobs. We are the foundation of the workforce and the educators of the next generation, laying the foundations for these students to begin their educational careers as early as toddlers! These benefits are needed because they show appreciation for a thankless job.

I am very grateful for the bonuses I have received because even as the director of a childcare facility, I have trouble making ends meet. I stumbled into this profession and excelled at it! I love my job so much that I completed my associate's as an adult and will complete my BA in my 50s! I have gone through the most challenging three years of my life. For the past three years, I had a very painful divorce after nearly 23 years, a very extensive surgery, and then a very painful injury. My life has been impacted significantly. I still hold it together as the director, managing 200 families and 30 staff members. But this left me with having to pay the mortgage, utilities, and everything else regarding a household, vehicles, insurance, bills, and groceries- all by myself. For me to keep my home, these incentives have come in handy! It makes my staff and I feel worthy of all we do in this human service field. I appreciate having the extra money, especially to help me with living expenses today.

I am a massive advocate for ECE, and I can see firsthand how important our occupation is to our students and families. I also see how hard my staff work to care for the students and administer developmental skills that students need to lay the foundations for their educational and developmental futures.

Jennifer Rathbun Director Joyful Noise, 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 Kirstey Randall, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at KinderArt.

I have been an educator for over ten years now. It's been an honor for me to teach young children and watch them develop the skill sets they will need to survive the rest of their lives. It's scientifically proven that children learn the most from birth to 5 years old. The fact that early childhood education is so underfunded and poorly managed by our state is heartbreaking. These kids deserve better!!!!

I'm a part-time student at URI and I work part-time at my center. This economy is horrendous and my socioeconomic status as a respected educator is laughable. I'm 30 years old and I still live with my parents because I cannot afford to move out, even when I was a full-time employee.

Educators deserve a livable wage! These bonuses only help a small fraction and if you get rid of them, people will leave the early education field for better paying jobs because it's not sustainable.

Early childhood education will cease to exist without funding. Caregivers are overworked and underpaid, so we all do the bare minimum at work. These kids are behind developmentally, in all age ranges because we do not have the resources or energy. We're all living in poverty. I have a coworker that is close to becoming homeless at this time in her life. Honestly, I do not plan on staying in childcare when I graduate because it's a joke.

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

Kirstey Randall

Teacher's Assistant

KinderArt

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 Ana Ramirez, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Eileen's Home Day Care.

I AM an early childhood educator because that has been my work vocation since I was a teenager. I was an elementary teacher in my country, the Dominican Republic, and I came to this country with the intention of continuing to help children grow up healthy, safe, well-nourished, and educated. I am willing to continue working with children, giving my best to them. That is why we need help and support from the relevant institutions to continue doing our work with peace of mind, physical health, and financial security that allows us to fulfill our responsibilities while giving the best of ourselves to families with young and school-age children.

They helped me cover necessary household expenses such as paying utilities and rent. Also, buying materials for children's activities, cleaning supplies, and paying bills.

I am a single mother; I raised my two children alone. I have a granddaughter with special needs (problems walking, delayed growth). Being a childcare provider, I finished raising my children, I managed to get my daughter to finish her university degree, and I helped her take care of the girl so she could work. I didn't care. I regret having dedicated so much time to this job and helping other families achieve their goals by working while I take care of their children safely and responsibly.

Mi nombre es Ana Ramírez y soy proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Eilen's Home Day Care. Soy una educadora de niños de la primera infancia porque esa es mi vocación de trabajo desde mi adolescencia. Fui maestra elemental en mi país Rep Dom. y llegue a este país con la intención de seguir ayudando a los niños a crecer sanos, seguros, bien nutridos y educados. Estoy dispuesta a seguir trabajando con los niños; dando lo mejor de mí para ellos. por eso necesitamos ayuda y apoyo de las instituciones pertinentes para seguir haciendo nuestro trabajo con paz mental, salud física y seguridad financiera que nos permita cumplir con nuestras responsabilidades al mismo tiempo que damos lo mejor de nosotras a las familias con niños pequeños y en edad escolar.

Me ayudaron a cubrir gastos necesarios en el hogar como pagar utilidades y renta. Además comprar materiales para las actividades de los niños, materiales de limpieza, pagar billes...

Soy una madre soltera; crié a mis dos hijos sola. tengo una nieta con necesidades especiales (problemas para caminar, retraso en el crecimiento). Siendo proveedor de cuidado infantil terminé de criar mis hijos, logré que mi hija terminara su carrera universitaria y la ayude a cuidar la niña para que ella pudiera trabajar. No me arrepiento de haber dedicado tanto tiempo a este trabajo y de ayudar a otras familias a lograr sus metas trabajando mientras yo les cuido sus hijos con seguridad y responsabilidad.

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.**

Ana Ramirez

Family Child Care Provider

Eileen'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 Yasmin Mola Fernandez, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Friend.

I've been working as a teaching assistant for five years now. Also, I'm currently a CCRI student in my last semester in the education field. I love working as a teacher because I like helping families in need and seeing the children grow each year in their educational development. My next goal is to go to URI and obtain a bachelor's degree in the field of education/languages.

I currently work two jobs: a teacher assistant and waitressing at least once a week to help with my bills. I live alone, and everything is up to me. I also go to school and pay for books and other stuff. The Pandemic Retention Bonus has helped me with bills, books, and other things needed.

The Pandemic Retention Bonus has helped me and all my coworkers. We are very appreciative of it. Please continue this program.

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

Yasmin Mola Fernandez

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 Kelly Ford, and I am a School Nurse at CCAP Headstart/EHS.

I am a registered nurse with a Bachelor's degree in science and nursing. I have been working for Headstart for 3 years. I recently obtained this Bachelor's degree in science and nursing in hopes of a pay increase but was only given an additional .70/hr. I love my job and providing services for families in need. Still, it is hard to support my own family and pay my student loans (there are not many tuition reimbursement programs available through Headstart for school nurses) with my minimal salary here.

The additional income from the retention bonuses helped cover ever-increasing bills like health insurance and food.

Childcare employees are significantly underpaid, in contrast to public school employees. Our benefits are also more expensive than public schools. This makes it challenging to retain staffing.

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

Kelly Ford

School Nurse

CCAP Headstart/EHS

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 Tara Foster, and I am the Senior Vice President of Youth Development at Pawtucket YMCA. I chose to be in the early education field because I had always wanted to be a teacher, even when I was very small. I pretended to be a teacher while my older brother was my student. I then went to college thinking I wanted to be an elementary teacher, so that is my bachelor's degree. However, once I graduated, I was alone and needed health coverage, so I became a preschool teacher. Ever since that day, I have never left the early education field. I am passionate about helping children and families start their education journey in the right direction. I have been in the field for over 25 years and have worked my way up to being the Senior VP of Youth Development for a non-profit agency. I strive always to do my best and have been fortunate to have the leaders who have taught me along the way. This field is so crucial for all families, now more than ever. With prices rising on almost everything, families have to work, and with work comes the need for childcare for their children. Our job is valuable in so many ways. Without the childcare workforce, families may not be able to survive the economic impact of what is happening now. Preparing children to be ready for their entry into the world of education is just as important. Please understand without qualified teachers, none of this would be possible.

The retention bonus has helped me in so many ways. It helps with basic life necessities that I may be unable to afford otherwise. I have been fortunate enough to be able to go back to school and finish my master's degree, thanks to the retention money. It helps pay for my books and other essentials needed.

Early education teachers and leaders do so much and shape all these little minds. More compensation needs to be provided for these individuals. Educators think about everyone else before thinking of themselves. We are very passionate about the work that we do each and every day.

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

Tara Foster Senior Vice President of Youth Development Pawtucket YMCA

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 Franceschi, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Day Care.

I have worked with children since graduating high school and have known since then that this is what I want to do. I love being able to make a difference in the lives of these children. Some of them spend 10 hours a day with us. We feed them, change them, love them, care for them, sing and read to them, and engage in enriching activities. While these sound fun and easy, they can present challenges daily. For those who haven't worked in childcare, you should know that we become their second person. They spend more time with us than they do at their own homes. We are their source of comfort and one of their first teachers. Some days, we may have children glued to our side all day if they aren't feeling well; some days, they may just not want to be at school and would rather be at home. We try our best as teachers to provide all the comforts of home for them, but that can be so hard, and some days, we just may need a 5-minute break to collect ourselves when everything we try doesn't seem to work. However, how their faces light up when they see is so rewarding; seeing them reach and accomplish their goals is so rewarding. It takes a particular person to work with children. It is not an easy job, but it is one of the most rewarding jobs you can imagine. I would do anything for the children in my care; they feel like my own, and I love them and care for them very much. I encourage you to come to my classroom and see what a day in the life of an infant teacher is like.

These programs have provided me with so much financial relief. I live with my boyfriend, and granted, we have a cheap apartment, but I have been living paycheck to paycheck before these programs. Living paycheck to paycheck is highly stressful and takes a toll on mental health. I used to work two jobs and attend school. Working two jobs was meant to make ends meet, as I was just not bringing home enough weekly to live comfortably. I was beyond exhausted. These programs allowed me to leave my second job and put all of my focus on my schooling and my children at work. Without these programs, I would have to start looking for another job. I will, of course, remain at the daycare because it is what I love to do, but that salary alone is not enough

to live in today's economy. To keep quality and qualified teachers in childcare, we need to either be paid what our work is worth, or these programs need to be continued. Unfortunate scenarios such as neglect happen at childcare programs because unqualified individuals work there thinking it will be an easy paycheck. We are helping raise the future of this world. Please allow us to do so effectively by providing us teachers and centers with what we need/deserve. These children deserve so much more. Thank you.

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

Emily Franceschi

Teacher

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 Erica Franco, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at CCAP - Cranston Child Development Center.

I love working with preschoolers and seeing their faces light up when they walk in through the door. How they run to give you a hug and say they love you. When you see how happy and proud they are when they finally do something by themselves, which once was hard to do on their own, seeing them grow more intelligent and stronger each day is amazing, and to know you had a part in that growth makes a teacher feel so happy to be in this work field.

Thanks to the programs, I have made a mortgage payment. When I was feeling tight and couldn't make ends meet, the money I received really helped me feel relieved when I could make a mortgage payment.

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

Erica Franco

Teacher's Assistant

CCAP - Cranston 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 Kate Frantz, and I am a Teacher at Barrington Early Childhood Center.

I have worked with young children since 2002 in several different capacities. I first found the joy of witnessing the sparks of learning in a child's expression while volunteering in a public school kindergarten classroom. I then began to work as an assistant in a small private preschool. After completing the TEACH program, where I attained an ECC, I became a lead teacher and assistant Education Coordinator. I particularly enjoy creating imaginative settings for children to play and learn. Every day is a new adventure, working to feed the children's eagerness, enthusiasm, and natural curiosity.

The bonus retention program encouraged me to remain in this field. My position, and that of a majority in the field, is that of part-time workers, with no sick time benefits or health care insurance provided. This extra income was helpful in being able to be absent from work with COVID-19 and still be able to pay for care and to pay bills. The demands in this field are increasing without appropriate compensation.

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

Kate Frantz

Teacher

Barrington Early Childhood 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 Asela Garcia, and I am the Owner of My First Steps Home Day Care.

We love children. I like to educate, and we need more help to continue helping them and more programs to continue training or to continue offering the best because you can't give to those you don't have. Children are the future. We need to train them so that when they finish school, they can go to another school if there is no problem. That is why we need you, Representative, to continue repairing education and these programs. I like to educate - I have been teaching for 15 years. We love our job, and the children need your help.

During the pandemic, the help we received was very helpful because it allowed us to continue with our business. May you continue helping the programs to continue educating us more and to do our best for the children who need them so much.

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

Mi nombre es Asela Garcia y soy el propietario de la guardería My First Steps Home.

Amos a los niños. Me gusta educar y necesitamos más ayuda para continuar ayudándos y más programa para seguir capacitado o para seguir ofreciendo los mejor porque tú no puede dar los que no tiene. Los niños son el futuro. Necesitamos fórmalos que cuando eso niños termine su escuela puedan ingresar al otro escuela si ningún problema. Por eso necesitamos que Representante continúes reparado la educación y los programas. Me gusta educar - llevo 15 año Amos sus trabajos y los niños necesitan su ayuda .

Durante la pandemia la ayuda que recibimos fue de mucha ayuda porque permitió que pudimos continuar con nuestro negocio. Que continúes ayudando los programas para continuar educándonos más y para dar los mejor de nosotras para los niños que tanto los necesitan Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **POR FAVOR APRUEBE ESTA LEY.**

Asela Garcia Owner My First Steps 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 Carmen Giron, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Homedaycare.

I like that I am teaching children to write their names, numbers, alphabet, and colors so that when they enter school, they already know it.

It has helped me a lot with daycare expenses since everything has gone up in price, for example, materials for ink and paper projects.

This helps us operate our daycare.

Mi nombre es Carmen Giron y soy proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Homedaycare.

Me gusta lo que ago enseñarles niños a escribir su nombre los números el abecedario y los colores para cuando ellos entren a la escuela ya sepan.

Me ha ayudado mucho con los gastos del daycare ya que todo ha subido de precio por ejemplo materiales para proyectos tinta papel.

Esta ayuda nos beneficia a tener nuestro daycare operando.

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.**

Carmen Giron

Family Child Care Provider

Home 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 Ashley Gosselin, and I am a Director at Gloucester Childcare Center.

I have been in the Early Childhood education field for 9 years now. I currently work as a director at Gloucester Childcare Center, but I started as a teacher's aide and became Director. I work in this field because I am passionate about working with young children and believe early childhood education is the foundation to help children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The retention bonus program has helped due to the inflation of basic household needs.

Unfortunately, early childhood educators are underpaid, and my family barely makes ends meet.

The bonus helped us cover the extra cost of living and allowed me to remain at my job.

Early childcare educators and the centers where they work are essential. Many people would be unable to work due to not having childcare for their children. We provide nurturing, safe environments for them, yet it is one of the lowest-paid fields with barely any benefits. The pilot programs help our employees stay in this field. Unfortunately, you may see many centers close due to a lack of staffing if we lose these programs.

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

Ashley Gosselin

Director

Gloucester 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 Josefina Guzman, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Beautiful Beginnings.

I love working with children. I love teaching them new things. I am an infant teacher at Beautiful Beginnings and enjoy my job.

Honestly, this extra money has helped with paying bills. Things are so expensive! The pay we receive is low. I Have two jobs to survive.

Please continue the bonuses - we really need them

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

Josefina Guzman

Teacher's Assistant

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 Sharon Hanson, and I am a Teacher and Education Coordinator at All About Kids Too Preschool.

I have worked with young children for the past 25 years. Quality child care has always been my main interest in life and what I have strived for in my career. I have gone from being a teacher's aide to owning my own preschool, and I am currently running my own classroom while working as the educational coordinator.

Before these grants were available to me, I was in the process of making a significant change in my life by changing careers. This was due to financial reasons only. These supplements have greatly improved my household finances and allowed me to continue doing what I love.

It is important to note that anyone can get a job in Early Childhood Education, but that doesn't necessarily mean they will provide quality care. With educated and trained professionals in this field to help guide and shape our future, it benefits all.

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

Sharon Hanson

Teacher and Education Coordinator

All About Kids Too Preschool

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 Hinckley, and I am an Administrator at East Bay Community Action Program - Champion Childcare.

I am an early childhood educator because I have decided to dedicate myself to improving children's life experiences. I worked at Head Start for two years and have recently moved to acting as a Site Coordinator for an afterschool program. Nothing is more important to me than letting children know how to navigate whatever life brings through calm and connected practices.

When I left a dozen years in real estate to follow my passion, I took a 50% cut to my pay. As a single parent, that stings every day. But I have decided to cut my spending so that I can follow my heart. The pandemic retention bonuses helped pay for healthier food, cultural events, and general needs.

I hope you, too, can recognize the importance of monetarily rewarding people in this field who are actively improving the future of our nation by raising good humans.

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

Heather Hinckley

Administrator

East Bay Community Action Program - Champion 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 Meghann Houle, and I am an Administrator at Creative Early Learning Center.

I am an early childhood educator and know the importance of early learning and meeting milestones for our children's future. Children are the future; therefore, where would our children be without early educators like myself? What will their future look like?

The pandemic retention bonuses helped put food on the table & for BASIC daily needs. In addition, it was not even close to what early educators deserve.

We need all we can get as we are losing early education teachers left and right to bigger enterprises such as Amazon, etc.

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

Meghann Houle

Administrator

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 Kristy Humes, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare.

I started in this field almost 7 years ago, knowing nothing about early childhood education. I fell in love with the children, the job, and the field. I have taken every step to further my knowledge and development to be the best teacher these kids deserve. It is a career I would like to stay in, a career in which I have put in so much time, money, and energy because I love it.

As a single mother working full-time and attending CCRI part-time, I am sure these programs have allowed me to stay in my desired career. Without these programs, I would have left to seek better-paying employment. We do not make much hourly, and we are denied overtime. As a single mother, finding a second part-time job would be very hard; these programs have allowed me to keep one job and have time for my child and school. Not having to pay for childcare is the number one reason I still work in the field.

I do not qualify for much state assistance even with making under 18 per hour as a single mother. These programs, especially the CCAP, have meant everything to me.

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

Kristy Humes

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 Stephen Imondi, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare East Greenwich.

I'm in Early learning childhood because I love working with children and seeing them grow and succeed in my career.

This helped me a lot because I got extra money in my bank account to support me in saving. Also, I was getting a little extra money to spend on daily events and living.

Both of these funds helped in ways that I can explain, especially during COVID-19. I was still able to work at the center that loved and enjoyed. I think this will still help everyone in the future because it will help everyone who has worked in childhood, which they love to do. Also, the extra money gave them the choice to stay in the center they like instead of looking for different centers for higher pay. I just got accepted to Step up to Wage\$ and am getting my second check now soon. That was also a great option to do as well.

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

Stephen Imondi

Teacher

Dr. Daycare East Greenwich

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 Josie Isabella, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Tri-County Community Action Program.

I enjoy working with children! I find pride and joy in my position. The pay rate as a TA certainly doesn't pay my bills, but I love coming to work daily. I believe if you enjoy your position, money is not everything, but knowing we have such programs to help us financially is an honor, and I would recommend such positions to work with children.

This program helped me stay in this position because it would help my family supplement my income. Please continue to assist us and continue these programs.

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

Josie Isabella

Teacher's Assistant

Tri-County Community Action Program

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 Maria Garcia, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Home Day Care.

I like children and to teach them colors, numbers and letters so when they go to school they know a little.

It did help me a lot because I bought a lot of things for the children to use.

We need you to continue helping us.

Mi nombre es Maria Garcia y soy proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en Home Day Care.

Porque me gustan mucho los niños y enseñarles los colores, los números y letras para cuando ellos ballan a la escuela sepan un poco.

Sí me ayudó mucho porque compré muchas cosas para que los niños usarán.

Nesecitamos que nos sigan ayudando.

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.**

Maria Garcia

Family Child Care Provider

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 Leeana Gosselin, and I am a member of the School Age Staff at AlphaBEST Education. I am enrolled as a junior at the University of Rhode Island, pursuing a degree in Elementary Education with a Middle-Level Certification in History. My choice of academic pursuit stems from a profound passion for working with children and witnessing their initial encounters with the world. Being able to serve as a reliable and nurturing figure for children, particularly those lacking such support at home, is a responsibility I hold in high regard. Recognizing the indispensable role of childcare programs in numerous families, I value their provision of secure environments wherein children can cultivate essential life skills.

Balancing my responsibilities as a student amidst a demanding schedule, compounded by a lengthy commute and the obligations of student teaching, leaves me with limited time for employment. Nonetheless, the flexibility afforded by my program enables me to pursue work opportunities while advancing my education. The invaluable grants I've been fortunate to receive have been instrumental in financing my academic journey, alleviating the financial burden that would otherwise impede my progress. With only my mother and elderly grandmother at home, I am responsible for covering all my expenses, including bills, sustenance, and tuition. Hailing from a modest background, these grants serve as a lifeline, empowering me to forge a path toward a brighter future and self-sufficiency.

Numerous childcare professionals nationwide are exiting their field due to inadequate compensation, understaffing, and insufficient backing from administrators, parents, and governmental entities. These grants and programs provide a lifeline for passionate individuals committed to their profession, enabling them to persevere amidst systemic shortcomings within the education system. While these grants represent a temporary fix for broader systemic issues, they offer educators contemplating departure an opportunity to prolong their tenure in the field, marking a positive initial stride toward addressing the underlying challenges.

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

Leeana Gosselin School Age Staff AlphaBEST Education

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 Jennifer, and I am a Teacher at the Children's Workshop.

I love working with children. I love seeing them grow. The hugs in the morning and throughout the day never fail to make me smile. I've been at this company for about almost 19 years now.

These programs have helped me pay my bills, rent, and car insurance. I am grateful for this \$750 that we have been getting.

I love what I do. But we childcare workers should be paid more, especially since we care for little ones.

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

Jennifer

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 Ana Jimenez, and I am a Floater, but I also work in admissions at the Bishop McVinney School.

I love helping families who don't know English with the admissions, enrollment, and financial aid process. It makes me feel needed, and that is something that feeds the soul.

I am a single mom, and these bonuses helped me stay at the job I am at and helped me catch up on my bills. It made me not stress as much knowing the bonus was coming (thank God) and be a happier mom because of this. They also made me a better worker and let me continue at my job and not find another one

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

Ana Jimenez

Floater and Admissions Staff

The Bishop McVinney 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 Kendra Johnson, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Lollipop Learning Center.

I am an early childhood educator because it is literally what I was meant to do. It's the only job I have felt so proud to be a part of; it gives my life purpose and meaning, and I genuinely think of it as doing what I want to do for a living! I love providing a safe environment for my kiddos daily and helping them learn and grow!

While I love this job, it is criminally underpaid. This year, I lost my Medicaid because I made just above the cut-off line. Not enough to survive, but also low enough wages to get assistance. I fall between the cracks and have rent, a car payment, insurance, and a phone bill; by the time all of that is paid for, all my money is gone. These payments have helped me eat and stay afloat doing what I love to do. I don't want to leave teaching, but I can't make it work without supplemental income.

Please help us. Every person I've ever worked with in the early childhood education field wants to do it and loves the children they serve daily but ultimately can't stay because they can't afford the necessities. Many women I work with have a second job to pay their bills. This shouldn't be the way. An investment in us is an investment in your children and your future!

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

Kendra Johnson

Teacher's Assistant

Lollipop 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 Trisha Kaminski, and I am a Teacher at a daycare center in Rhode Island.

The extra money from the pandemic retention bonus helped my family and me as a single mom. I am trying to provide a better life for my kids...We all know daycare workers are definitely underpaid.

Our elected officials should really take into consideration what we do and how we impact these young children. We play a very important role in their young lives. We are with these children more than their parents and should be paid much more.

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

Trisha Kaminski

Teacher

Daycare 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 Kendra, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Lollipop Learning Center.

I am an early childhood educator because I am meant to do this. Working with children 4-5 is my passion, and I love it. I am going to college to get a degree in ECE and further my education in this field. Unfortunately, because I am in early childhood education, I'm not part of any type of union that can advocate for fair pay and benefits. I pay for my own health insurance out of pocket, and it's just too much. The cost of living is insane, and this job simply does not support me. It's heartbreaking.

This has been my safety net. I do not have any leftover income after bills to save for emergencies like being short on rent/car issues, health issues, etc. This has been my saving grace to put something away for an emergency.

Please, please, please help early childhood educators. We love our job, or we wouldn't do it! We just want to be able to live.

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

Kendra

Teacher's Assistant

Lollipop 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 Diane Kingston, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at WHSCDA Inc.

The money is very helpful for me to stay in my current education job. We are a low-income agency with lower pay than other teaching jobs. The extra money helps me with the cost of living expenses. Please continue these programs - they mean everything to us.

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

Diane Kingston

Teacher's Assistant

WHSCDA Inc.

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 Beth Lilligreen, and I am a Teacher at Cadence Academy Preschool.

Everyone knows a child grows the most mentally from birth to age five. So why are we not investing in those educators with better salaries? I am a teacher in the early Childhood Education field who struggles to stay in the field because of the wages that we make. I have my BA and a CDA certificate and barely make it by. I have a son who is in Preschool, and if I weren't given an employee discount for him to attend, I would not be able to afford to stay in this field. The cost of daycare is too high. It doesn't even amount to the wages of the teachers. We work hard to educate and create an atmosphere that makes other people's children feel comfortable at school. We are drained, exhausted, and burned out. We take money from our pockets to create a comfortable and educated classroom. I was a part of two programs that helped supplement pay for my wages. I would have left the field months ago if these programs weren't around. It has helped me stay afloat financially tremendously. I hope the government sees that increasing early education wages is extremely important.

These programs helped me provide for my family. This money put food on the table and allowed us to stay in the home we currently live in.

Increase early educators' wages, or you'll see less highly-qualified people leave this field.

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

Beth Lilligreen

Teacher

Cadence Academy Preschool

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 Adys Laboy, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Adys Family Day Care.

I like to work with children and their families and this work has been a blessing for me and my family, since it is the only income we have.

I was able to pay the house mortgage. I thought we were going to lose our home.

Please continue supporting us, listening to our needs and concerns, to improve and provide a better service to the community.

Me gusta trabajar con los niños y su familia y este trabajo ha sido de bendición para mi y mi familia, ya que es la única entrada que tenemos.

Pude pagar la morgues de la casa. Pensé que íbamos a perder nuestro hogar.

Que sigan apoyándonos, escuchando nuestras necesidades e inquietudes, para mejorar y brindar un mejor servicio a la comunidad.

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.**

Adys Laboy

Family Child Care Provider

Adys Family 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 Altagracia Rojas, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at a Home Day Care.

I provide children with Early Education and a Healthy Environment.

These programs were very helpful for me. They helped me buy materials to share with the children and food, etc.

PLEASE CONTINUE GIVING MORE ENCOURAGEMENT THAT THE SUPPLIERS NEED IT.

Mi nombre es Altagracia Rojas y soy un proveedora cuido infantil familiar en un Home Day Care.

Yo le proveo a los niños educación temprana, y un ambiente saludable.

Estos programas fueron de mucha ayuda para mí. Me sirvieron para comprar materiales para compartir con los niños y alimentación etc.

QUE POR FAVOR CONTINUEN DANDO MAS ESTIMULOS QUE LAS PROVEEDORAS LO NECESITAMOS.

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.**

Altagracia Rojas

Family Child Care Provider

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 Michaella Rocha, and I am a Teacher at Sweet Peas.

It is essential to provide young children with an education in a quality school with qualified teachers before going to kindergarten because it helps them succeed later in life.

The grants helped me pay my bills, which keep going up. I tried to get the Wage\$ financial help, but they ran out of money.

Child care and early learning are ESSENTIAL to our economy and our state. We need prioritized funding to continue! There is a massive shortage of early childhood teachers because we are underpaid and undervalued. I qualify as low-income and use the grants. This is how I can afford to pay my bills, which keep increasing.

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

Michaella Rocha

Teacher

Sweet Peas

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 Lawana Robertson, and I am a Teacher at Dr. Day Care.

I started at Dr. Day Care as an assistant teacher. Over the past two years, I worked my way up to a lead teacher/assistant administrator, and I love my job and the children so much. I drive to work every day (5 days out of the week) to be there for my students to help them develop and grow. It is what I look forward to every morning. I've wanted to be a daycare teacher since 2019, and a year later, I was offered a position. It's been the best job I've ever had. I love the children and my staff, and I love what I do.

The pandemic retention bonus has helped me out a lot because I drive to work every day, and over the past 2 years, it has helped me fix up my car when needed. This bonus has also helped me pay my rent and other bills.

A lot of child care workers depend on this bonus to help get them through or help keep them afloat in life when it comes to critical personal finances and everything. It is important to us that we get a bonus because it shows how much we are appreciated. With the current salary, some don't see it as enough when working with children, so this bonus is a plus for childcare workers who really need it.

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

Lawana Robertson

Teacher

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 Cara Burns, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Hand in Hand Christian Preschool.

I started volunteering in my daughter's kindergarten class and loved it! I saw how understaffed they were. The children needed an extra adult to listen and read to them. When my youngest went to Kindergarten, I applied for a job at his former preschool. I have found it rewarding in the most profound way. Seeing their progress over the two years they have been here has been incredible.

The bonus has helped pay for my children's extracurricular activities. It allowed my family to provide a new sport.

So many of us in this field have to work more than one job to raise a family. It shouldn't be this way. We have college degrees and college debt.

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

Cara Burns

Teacher's Assistant

Hand in Hand Christian Preschool

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 Sarah Campbell, and I am an Education Coordinator at Smith Hill ECLC.

I came to this field 20+ years ago, thinking this would be a temporary job while finishing my degree in elementary education. I fell in love. This is such a unique and magical field. Over the years, I have transitioned from teacher assistant, to teacher, to being part of the state pre-k program. Currently, I am the Education Coordinator at Smith Hill. I LOVE what I do: supporting teachers, advocating for equitable learning opportunities, and developing professional development opportunities for our program and beyond. Being available to support our families and children means the world to me, and I have had the chance to do what I love for so long.

The pandemic retention bonuses have helped supplement our family income when everything costs so much! It has also helped us to pay off debts incurred because of these additional expenses. I have also seen the quality of life increase for those I work with. It feels terrific to have income being supplemented in an underpaid field. I hear stories every day from the teaching staff here at Smith Hill about how much those bonuses have helped.

Continuing to support the field of ECE will help the children of our future. It is crucial to invest in our staff because they have a substantial impact on the growth of our youngest children. Let's compensate our brainbuilders in a way that validates the fantastic work they do each day!

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

Sarah Campbell

Education Coordinator

Smith Hill ECLC

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 Cara Burns, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Hand in Hand Christian Preschool.

I started volunteering in my daughter's kindergarten class and loved it! I saw how understaffed they were. The children needed an extra adult to listen and read to them. When my youngest went to Kindergarten, I applied for a job at his former preschool. I have found it rewarding in the most profound way. Seeing their progress over the two years they have been here has been incredible.

The bonus has helped pay for my children's extracurricular activities. It allowed my family to provide a new sport.

So many of us in this field have to work more than one job to raise a family. It shouldn't be this way. We have college degrees and college debt.

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

Cara Burns

Teacher's Assistant

Hand in Hand Christian Preschool

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 Nilda Cancel, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at EBCAP.

I am an early childhood educator and have been doing this for over 20 years. I feel that children this early need people in their lives to look up to, learn, and grow in, believing they can succeed in everything they put their minds to. I have my own children, and I am also a foster mom. I love giving and showing that I'm there for them because they need to be surrounded by adults who care for them and are positive.

I consider myself grateful and very blessed. 5 years ago, an unexpected event touched my life. I was told I had cancer, and I lost a lot of things, including employment. I went through Chemo, operations, and radiation. It was one of the hardest things that happened to me. Too many worries, depression, and wondering how am I going to get back on my feet entered my life. I had to stop being a foster mom because I became sick. I was never knocked down to nothing. I started caring for myself and getting better until the day the doctor told me I could work again. Sure enough, my heart was in my passion - the children. I applied to get work, started working, and was offered these programs, which became financially helpful. I've been able to become more stable financially through these programs and could not imagine my life without them.

The programs (pandemic retention bonuses and Step Up to Wage\$) are essential to so many and allow me to enjoy what I do even more: to be an educator and be there for someone.

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

Nilda Cancel

Teacher's Assistant

ECCAP

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 Sarah Carr, and I am a Director and Education Coordinator at Coggeshall Club.

There are so many reasons why I am an early childhood educator. The ability to foster the learning and love of learning in children is a self-rewarding position. Knowing that I am giving these children the future of our nation and the tools they need to set them up for success is an incredible feeling. I love what I do and have gotten to my current administrative position to help others who feel the same way grow as educators.

While I do not have children and did not benefit from two of the programs, the retention bonus has helped me and my educators tremendously. So many of them are young educators working toward their goals and dreams as they help the children they teach do the same. While I would give them everything I could. Unfortunately, this profession in this economy does not pay what it should. My teachers give everything to their students despite their own financial stresses. The retention bonus has relieved these teachers (and myself!) to help us stay on our feet so we can put all our energy and focus into what we do.

As said above, these programs have made an enormous difference in helping educators financially. Especially in such a demanding field that does not compensate as it should. I recently moved from MA to teach in RI, where I went to school, and am struggling to find a house in this market. These retention bonuses have helped add a good chunk to my savings toward a house so I can remain in RI teaching for the foreseeable future.

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

Sarah Carr

Director and Education Coordinator

Coggeshall Club

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 Mary Castrignano, and I am the Director at Tots Town Inc. Child Care Center.

I am probably the smallest center in the state, with a capacity for 14 children, but a fantastic center! I have been open since 1990. Without the pandemic money's help, I would have been out of business. My staff and I receive the Pandemic Retention Bonus and Step Up to Wages. I have students I get paid for from the CCAP program. The money my staff receives through them is a considerable help and helps me professionally, keeping me able to meet my financial needs. I definitely need these programs to continue to survive. Your commitment to getting these programs to continue would be greatly appreciated.

The money we received helped my staff and me financially. And my daycare/preschool program was able to continue.

Since my center is so small, doing a fundraiser with families to earn extra money and participate in them is hard.

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

Mary Castrignano

Director

Tots Town Inc. 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 Amy Caparco, and I am the Director at Sunshine Early Child Care Center.

These programs have helped us maintain our staff. We are all barely hanging on by a thread in regards to this staffing crisis. Yet the state put millions into a new website when we already had one in place. Make it make sense.

I would LOVE to know why these three programs are set to end but the state found it within their budget to launch this new RISES website. After already spending \$\$\$\$ on Exceed. They are talking about ending the funding for the state covering the cost of fingerprinting... Which is MANDATORY for all childcare employees. But the state had enough money in their budget for this website.
MAKE IT MAKE SENSE!

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

Amy Caparco

Director

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 Kimberly Chan, and I am a Teacher's Assistant in the childcare program at the University of Rhode Island.

I am working on getting my Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Rhode Island.

CCAP has helped my family financially- to stay in the comfort of our home to make ends meet, study as a first-generation college graduate, and devote my time to complete other studies to receive certifications as a Nurse Assistant for the state of emergency during the pandemic start as of 2020.

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

Kimberly Chan

Teacher's Assistant

University of Rhode Island

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 Ashley Charello, and I am an Administrator at The Learning Experience.

The retention bonuses have been helpful. I know all of my staff have genuinely appreciated them. Most women who work for me live paycheck to paycheck, which often helps them get ahead.

I have been able to hire multiple new staff members with children. Some of my staff have had children and would have to leave because they couldn't afford to send their children, even if we had them 1/2 off. We can't give them free tuition because we wouldn't be able to stay in business.

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

Ashley Charello

Administrator

The Learning Experience

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 Cheryl, and I am a Teacher and Education Coordinator at Acorn Academy.

Every day, I wake up and am grateful to work in a field I have loved for over 25 years. Nothing else comes to mind when I think of what else I would do with my life. With every fiber of my being, I am an early childhood educator. Since the pandemic, I have encountered more children with anxiety and spectrum disorders. These children have sensory overload and require extra love and attention daily. The preschoolers whom I work with today are the "Pandemic babies." Parents and children alike were very stressed, which has become evident in the classroom as we see more disruptive, emotional, and aggressive behavioral outbursts. My job is to ensure these children feel safe, loved, and heard.

As an over-50-year-old cancer survivor and single woman, the retention bonuses afforded me the opportunity to pay some bills without extra stress and replace some broken appliances. They also allowed me to help with my daughter's wedding this past fall.

It is evident in all of the research that RI early childhood educators are paid less than many other fields. If it weren't for us, many people would not have been able to return to work so quickly during the Pandemic. If not for us, people could not work without caring for their precious little ones. It is my honor, daily privilege, and pleasure to supply this service. However, as an educator with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in early childhood education, my salary is way below the cost of living standards. It is far beneath other women in other fields who achieved such postgraduate degrees!

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

Cheryl

Teacher and Education Coordinator

Acorn Academy

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 Mariela Clavijo, and I am a Teacher at Cranston Child Development Center.

I am an early childhood educator because I love working with families and children. The first five years, from birth to age 5, are crucial in the development of a child. I know I make a difference by providing my students with a safe and nurturing environment. I love the relationships I have built throughout the years. I love watching my students grow and getting them ready for kindergarten and the real world. I love to make a difference by providing my students with experiences and support in the areas of social emotional as well as cognitive skills.

The pandemic retention bonuses were helpful in decreasing some student loan debts as well as helped in putting extra money in my pocket since the economy is increasing and in early childhood education, we still need to see more increases in our salary.

Please revisit the Wage\$ salary supplement program and provide early childhood educators with wages to keep them in head-start programs which are beneficial and crucial especially in the first years of a child's development. We make a difference in our families lives as well providing them with resources as well as working collaboratively with families to benefit the whole child .

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

Mariela Clavijo

Teacher

Cranston 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 Latoya Clement, and I am a Teacher at Roger Williams Daycare Center.

I have been working at the RWDCC for 15 years and I like working with children because I enjoy teaching them to be better in life. We know that they are like a sponge and can remember and grow up to be better. In the first 5 years of their lives, children learn a lot, and at times they shock me. At the same time, as a teacher, I feel like what I'm teaching them they are learning and I am glad to be a part of their lives as a teacher and also as another parent.

The Pandemic Retention Bonus and the Step Up to Wage\$ salary supplements that I have received help me out financially because we as teachers don't make a lot of money. We are the foundation of the education for young children. I am happy that I was able to receive these funds from these programs because it also helps me to even buy food as the world is changing and the cost of living is going up. Being out of work during COVID-19, I was making more money staying at home collecting unemployment than I was actually working in the job. As teachers in the daycare world, we do a lot and I feel like at times we are not recognized as important. I do appreciate all the help that I am getting, so thank you.

I would like to share that these programs are a big help and we as teachers also struggle to pay bills medical and other things in life.

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

Latoya Clement

Teacher

Roger Williams Daycare 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 Dawn Coletta, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Tri-County State Pre-K. I have worked in education for 20 years, 12 of which have been in early childhood education. I have worked with children from 6 weeks old to Pre-K throughout that time. I have worked as a Teacher's assistant in some classrooms and taught my own classes without a degree in many classes for many years. Working with children is what I love, and teaching compassion and wanting a better future for children is my fuel. Nothing is more beautiful or rewarding than seeing a child's face light up after a new accomplishment.

Tri-County is where it all began for me. My children were part of the Head Start program in North Providence. Being a young, single mom, this was a lifesaver for me. I began volunteering in my daughter's classroom, became a substitute, and transitioned to working full-time for the company. It is the only place I ever felt comfortable caring for my children. This company helps children, unlike other places I have been, where children are kicked out because of their behaviors. Here, we work as a team, alongside the families, with outside resources to help every child in every way we possibly can! I am proud to work for this organization and proud of the great strides we have made with our class this year, and I look forward to many more as long as I can stay afloat financially.

There is a shortage of educators, but we are exceptionally patient, caring, and hardworking. Education assistance is extremely important, as well as better wages. We give our all, especially at Tri-County, but we also have to survive and prepare for our futures. The less we stress about surviving, the better educators we can be for our students.

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

Dawn Coletta

Teacher's Assistant

Tri-County State Pre-K

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 Claudia Cook, and I am a Teacher at EBCAP Pre-K Forest Ave.

I am a Head Start preschool teacher who likes working with young children. I have been doing this for 25 years and believe that parent involvement and love for school begins in preschool.

With this extra money, I enrolled in school to complete my bachelor's degree and keep my job as a lead teacher. The extra money has helped me pay for my household's student loans, electricity, and oil.

Although working with young children is very rewarding, it is also exhausting. Classroom teachers are 100% responsible for just about everything, from children's learning to the safety and welfare of the whole classroom and meeting expectations (ECERS-CLASS-Professional development-IEP's-Assessments). After being in a classroom for six hours nonstop, teachers feel physically and mentally exhausted, only to have to do aftercare. Because of this, teachers are constantly sick and calling out. There is a lack of subs because agencies can only afford to pay them so much. In return, teachers are left with less help and more stress. Since most teachers make very small wages, it is easy to transfer to other jobs where they can get paid more and have fewer responsibilities, stress, and demands. Early childhood teachers feel underappreciated and often referred to as babysitters. They don't see the importance of high-quality classrooms and well-educated teachers in this field.

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

Claudia Cook

Teacher

EBCAP Pre-K Forest Ave

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 Cook, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at EBCAP.

I love working with young children and seeing them learn and grow. Some kids we meet when they're only a few months old and watch the first few years of their lives grow up right before us. It's always a magical experience to see them become tiny people.

The retention bonus has helped me pay for various medical bills. My daughter was born with a cleft lip and cleft palate. She's needed special bottles, utensils, sippy cups and several surgeries to begin correcting her issues and not being afraid of how to afford it all has really eased a huge burden off our shoulders.

The CCAP has been helpful allowing me to keep my job and afford to care for my daughter. I'm a single mom and I do my best to save every penny I can to give her everything she needs and not stressing between paying for childcare or quitting my job has been a lifesaver.

I know many families who have benefitted from these programs. These programs are encouraging teachers to stay in a field that often doesn't offer much else financially. And programs like these are helping to get people in the door of this field.

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

Jessica Cook

Teacher's Assistant

EBCAP

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 Confesora Cordero, and I am an owner and family childcare provider at a family childcare program in Rhode Island.

My motivation to establish my Home Day Care, first of all, was to take care of my own children and, at the same time, to be able to take care of other children who, like mine, were left in family care. I understood that I could give my service to mothers. Like me, they had the need to take their children to safe care, where they will receive, above all, love and all the necessary tools for their development academically, socially, physically and enriched by a pleasant environment, and with the necessary tools for all types of age, regardless of race and culture. I consider that equality and mutual respect are very important to be able to do a good job. This is a team effort that we do with each child's family. Therefore, good communication is very important. I can say without fear of being wrong that I love my job, and I love my children since they learn from me, but we also learn from the love that they give us every day. Thank you!

These programs were of great help to me because they can implement change in the environment of my daycare. I consider it a great help and am grateful for what I received.

Mi nombre es Confesora Cordero y soy propietaria y proveedora de cuidado infantil familiar en un programa de cuidado infantil familiar en Rhode Island.

Mi motivacion para establecer mi Home Day Care .antes que todo fue el de cuidar mi propio hijos y la misma vez poder cuidar otros niños, que al igual que los mio eran dejado en un cuidofamiliar,entendí que podía dar mi servicio a madre .que como yo tenían la necesidad de llevar sus niños a un cuido seguro,donde van a recibir sobre todas las cosa amor y todas las herramienta necesaria parasu desarrollo academicamente socialmante,físicamente y enriquecido de un entorno placentero,y con las herramienta necesaria para todo tipo de edad.sin importa Raza y cultura.considero que la igualdad y el respecto mutuo es muy importante para poder desarrollar un buen trabajo. Esto es un trabajo en equipo ,que hacemos con la familia de cada

niño. Por tanto la buena comunicación es muy importante. Yo puedo decir sin temor a equivocarme que amo mi trabajo y amo a mis niños ya que ellos aprenden de mi,pero también nosotros aprendenos del amor que ellos nos regalan cada día. Gracias!

Estas programs fue de gran ayuda para mi porque puede implementar cambio en el entorno de mi Day Care. Considero de gran ayuda y agradezco por lo recibido.

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.**

Confesora Cordero

Owner and Family Child Care Provider

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 Paula Costa, and I am an Education Coordinator at Stork's Nest Child Academy.

I have been employed at Stork's Nest Child Academy for 26 years. I was the site director for the East Greenwich location for 24 years and now I am currently the Education Coordinator. I have been in the education field for over 32 years and have loved every minute of it. I love working with children and helping guide teachers to help each child reach important milestones.

Since COVID, there has been a change in employment. I have noticed that it has become more and more challenging to find educated teachers who want to be in the early childhood field. COVID hit, and different jobs were created in which people can work from home, make money on their phones or be their own boss. Besides the new job opportunities, many work industries found themselves in need of employees and started offering higher pay and bonuses. We couldn't compete with some of the pay being offered. We have lost many great teachers who left the field for a job in a different field, offering more pay. We have changed our benefits and our salary scale, but it doesn't seem to be enough. The pandemic retention bonus, the Step Up to Wage\$, and the CCAP for childcare workers are all programs that our teachers use. These programs were the reason we could keep many of our qualified teachers.

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

Paula Costa

Education Coordinator

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 Michelle Crespo, and I am an Education Coordinator at Love4All.

I love working with children, and I want to advocate for them and make a difference for them, one child at a time!

Educators in the field of early childhood education do not get paid much. We get paid less than teachers in the school department, but we have more roles and responsibilities. However, we get paid a bare minimum wage. As early childhood educators, we live paycheck to paycheck and struggle on a weekly basis. These programs have helped tremendously in catching up on bills and saving money on childcare prices.

I want to advocate for more support and better wages in the early childhood field. I was denied for the Step Up to Wage\$ due to income, but I have worked hard to get my master's degree, and those funds would have helped pay some of my school loans. Everyone with a degree should have qualified for the Step Up to Wage\$ program.

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

Michelle Crespo

Education Coordinator

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 Yolanda Crockett, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Friends.

I am an Early Childhood Educator because someone believed in me and guided me as a former Head Start child. As well as my own child, I've seen firsthand the nurturing guidance that was given during these pivotal formative years.

The CCAP for Child Care Educators program allowed my child, who is two, to begin his social skills and learning scaffolding somewhere safe and fun. I am not overwhelmed with payment, the two-parent home, or the working conundrum that comes with regular CCAP, but I am seen as an Early Childhood Educator who wants what is best for my child while I educate.

I am an early childhood educator TA with my CDA. I also have Spina Bifida, which limits me to only work part-time. These two financial additions allowed my two children a bit more mobility.

These programs brought solace and the verification that educators were seen as individuals.

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

Yolanda Crockett

Teacher's Assistant

Children's Friends

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 Jennifer Crookes, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at East Bay Community Action Program - Head Start.

I love making a difference in the lives of children. Our program has always tried to keep up with the competitive wages of other early childhood programs. We have always tried to make staff feel safe to voice their concerns. This, as well as these continued programs, are essential to the childcare industry.

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

Jennifer Crookes

Teacher's Assistant

East Bay Community Action Program - 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 Katelyn Crudale, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Learning Express.

When I became a mom, I was flooded with worries and different things I was scared about regarding my children. One was childcare; you hear all these horror stories. I wanted to be the person the parents felt safe enough to go to work, go to school, and handle their day-to-day life, knowing worrying about their child's safety wouldn't have to be a concern with me and my coworkers being the caretakers. I love being a teacher and watching these babies grow from 6 weeks until they go off to kindergarten. I am now pursuing my degree in ECE and plan to specialize in special education to continue being a safe place for all children.

As everyone knows, daycare workers and teachers are not paid the big bucks. With the pandemic retention bonuses and the Step Up to Wage\$ programs, I could keep my family's head above water, keep up with my bills, and provide my classroom with extra materials and toys for the children. It's beyond helpful to be able to have a little extra when you need it.

We aren't just daycare teachers but mothers, caretakers, and family members. We do not do our job for the pay - we do it because we love what we do. But financially, minimum wage is not a livable wage. The programs in question help with more than just "pocket money." We are able to catch up on bills, supply classrooms, etc.

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

Katelyn Crudale

Teacher's Assistant

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 Alba Jimenez Cuba, and I am an Administrator at PerLis Home Day Care.

Dedication is the basis for success. Communication is the best way of Service.

These programs were the basis of financial support to continue operating. They are an essential factor to continue operating. I am an Early Childhood Educator committed to the Community I serve.

Mi nombre es Alba Jimenez Cuba y soy una administrador en PerLis Home Day Care.

La dedicacion, es la base para el exito, La ccomunicacion es la mejor via de Servicio

Estos programs Fue la base de soporte financiero para seguir oprando. Son factor indispensablepara seguir operando. Soy una Educadora de primera infancia comprometida conla Comunidad a que sirvo.

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.**

Alba Jimenez Cuba

Administrator

PerLis 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 Robin Cunetta, and I am a Teacher Mentor and Coach at CCAP Child Development Center.

I have been a teacher for preschool children for the past 14 years. In my role, I feel a sense of responsibility to help the children I serve to grow into confident beings. My job is to teach them academics and social and emotional skills to last a lifetime! We are setting the foundation for their future. In my new role as a teacher mentor/coach, I hope to support teachers in doing the same. In addition to supporting the children, I am responsible for supporting the families in whatever way I can. I see early childhood as a partnership between educators and families to support the children.

The pandemic retention bonuses helped to supplement my pay and keep up with the cost of living since the pandemic. Everything has increased in price, and the retention bonuses have helped to keep me financially stable.

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

Robin Cunetta

Teacher Mentor and Coach

CCAP 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 Nichole Decesare, and I am a Teacher at Woonsocket Head Start.

I am an early childhood educator because I enjoy and love to teach preschoolers. I enjoy seeing their progress from the beginning to the end of the year. It is a very fulfilling and rewarding job to see the children's learning growth.

The Pandemic Retention Bonus helped me with teacher supplies for the classroom with the children. This also helped financially because my father is on total disability, and it's very challenging to run a household these days with the cost of living and what teachers get paid.

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

Nichole Decesare

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 Karina Fagan, and I am a Teacher at Brown Fox Point ECEC and a Director at South County Montessori School.

I have a bachelor's degree and have worked in Early Childhood Education for 18 years. It is a shame that the profession is so poorly valued here in RI, as I've worked in MA for many years and made significantly more money than I make in RI for a similar job. I've been working in RI for almost 6 years, and even with small salary increases and bonuses, I still don't make as much as I made 6 YEARS AGO in MA! It is past time to work on this problem so that other qualified and experienced educators like myself can remain in this field.

The bonuses have been crucial to my ability to stay in the field of early childhood education. I can make more money in stores like Target or Whole Foods, and it doesn't come even close to the responsibility of educating young children. I think it's critical that financial support be made available directly to educators or the preschools/daycare centers so they can pay us competitive wages and retain the most qualified staff.

Competitive salaries and benefits are essential so qualified and experienced educators can remain in early childhood education. The schools I've been working at have been losing qualified teachers and cannot rehire with the same level of experience. We have a lot of inexperienced people joining the field, and they don't have the proper training to deliver the same level of care.

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

Karina Fagan

Teacher at Brown Fox Point ECEC

Director at South County Montessori 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 Gina Slattery, and I am a Teacher at Breezy Knoll Child Care Center.

I started in this profession right after college. I have stayed for over 30 years. The people I work for are wonderful to the families to whom we provide a service.

Although I love my job and can't imagine doing anything else, I have reached a cap on how much I earn. I may or may not get a Christmas bonus. It depends on the year that the center has had. My job does not take into consideration the rising prices of everyday life. Most government help is for younger people so that centers can retain them. There is not much out there to help out the people that have spent their lives in this profession. For that reason I am thankful for the retention bonus.

We hear so much talk as to how important Early Childhood is, yet we have seen no changes as to how we get paid. I have been in this profession for over 30 years and have yet to see any change. Luckily, I am married and have a dual income family. But we still struggle with rising prices and student loans for our children. I can't even begin to imagine living this life as a single parent.

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

Gina Slattery

Teacher

Breezy Knoll Child Care Center