

April 30, 2024
Renee Pepler
Assistant Teacher
In support of H-7251

Dear House Finance Committee,

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

I've been in the field for about fifteen years. Many years of experience. I only have a few classes that were for an Early childhood Degree., the rest of my classes were for Human Resources. I feel that my experience in the classroom is just as important. I'm speaking out for those of us who've made a difference in the numerous lives of young children and their families. Childcare/preschool etc is the foundation of our society, yet we are not being compensated. We are expected to do hours of P.D. and aren't compensated for that either. We are dedicated to our students and families, and we deserve more. The Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act will invest \$2.5 million to continue the Child Care WAGE\$ national model program, to provide substantial wage supplements to recognize, reward, and retain qualified and skilled early educators with CDAs, associate's, and bachelor's degrees. This program will end in summer 2024 without new funding.

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

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

Sincerely,

Renee Pepler