



Alex Moore, Political Director

SEIU 1199NE

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April 29, 2024

Subject: Support for H-7251: Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of SEIU 1199NE, representing child care providers across Rhode Island, to express our strong support for Representative Susan Donovan's bill, H-7251, the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act. This important legislation seeks to sustain and enhance recruitment and retention initiatives that are critical for our early care and education programs.

The Rhode Island Child Care WAGE\$ program, under this act, provides significant wage supplements, which directly benefit providers like those we represent. For example, a child care provider earning just under \$23 per hour and holding a CDA credential benefits immensely from an annual supplement of \$3,000. This supplement significantly alleviates financial pressure, allowing her to focus more on delivering quality early childhood education rather than worrying about financial stability. This kind of support is crucial for retaining skilled providers in a sector known for its high turnover rates.

Moreover, the Rhode Island Child Care Pandemic Retention bonuses, offering \$750 per quarter, have proven to be a lifeline for providers during the challenging times of the past few years. This bill proposes to continue these bonuses for frontline workers, further stabilizing the workforce and ensuring that children in Rhode Island continue to receive care from experienced and dedicated professionals.

Without the passage of H-7251, we risk the discontinuation of these programs by Summer 2024, leading to more classroom closures, increased childcare tuition for private-paying families, and extended waiting lists. This would not only disrupt the lives of many families but also impact the overall quality of early childhood education in our state.

By supporting H-7251, the House Finance Committee will help ensure that our child care providers, who play such a critical role in the early development stages of Rhode Island's children, are adequately supported and compensated. Your support for this legislation will demonstrate a commitment to both the children and those dedicated to their care and education.

Thank you for considering our strong support for this bill. We trust you will make the right decision to benefit our educators, children, and the future of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Alex Moore