

April 30, 2024

Toni Rose

Administrative Assistant/floater

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.**

Hello, my name is Toni Rose and I work at Brown Fox Point Early Childhood Education Center, Inc. I have worked here for sixteen years since 2007 and before that I ran a home childcare for ten years. I have been in this profession for twenty-six years.

My current position is administrative assistant/floater. I started off as an assistant teacher but due to an operation I came out of the classroom to become an office assistant but also started floating due to lack of staff. The shortage of staff especially qualified staff has always been a problem, but it just has intensified after the pandemic especially with seasoned providers leaving the profession. Younger providers are not trying to stay in this profession due to I believe low wages and lack of respect for people who have chosen to care for our young children. We are underpaid and, in some cases, overworked because of the shortage of staff. People need childcare and we need livable wages.

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

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,

Toni Rose