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**Subject: Support for H-5200 – Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, which represents 7,000 healthcare and service workers across Rhode Island—including approximately 450 licensed family child care providers—I am writing in strong support of H-5200, the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act.

Our family child care providers are on the front lines of early learning, offering nurturing, developmentally appropriate care to infants and toddlers across the state. These are the caregivers who open their doors before sunrise and work long days to provide safe, enriching environments that allow parents to work and children to thrive. But the workforce is stretched thin, underpaid, and at risk of burnout and turnover.

H-5200 takes meaningful steps to support and stabilize this workforce by investing in the programs that help early educators succeed and stay in the field. These include:

- **T.E.A.C.H. scholarships**, which help providers further their education and credentials;
- **Registered apprenticeships**, which allow educators to gain hands-on experience and mentorship while pursuing formal training; and
- **The Child Care WAGE\$ program**, which provides education-based salary supplements that improve retention and compensation for those doing this vital work.

We especially support the bill's commitment to allocating at least \$1 million per year to continue the WAGE\$ model. It's a small investment with a big impact—helping child care providers make ends meet, stay in the field, and build stronger relationships with the children and families they serve.

Early educators—especially those running family child care homes—are overwhelmingly women, many of them women of color. Investing in this workforce is not only a matter of economic justice, but of ensuring that every Rhode Island child has access to stable, high-quality care.

We urge you to pass H-5200 and support the workers who care for and educate our youngest Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Alex Moore  
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