

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Ann Homer, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Friend.

I've worked in Child Care, Head Start, and Pre-K for over 20 years. I love my job, but I also have to work part-time at night to pay my bills because the pay is so low. The cost of living in RI is very high. I'm in my 50s now, and two jobs are a lot. I work 7:30 am - 4:00 pm at school and then drive to Target to work 5-11 pm a few days a week. It's a very long day.

My part-time job pays less than an hour than my teaching job. I have considered leaving the field for a job that pays more. The bonus money I have received has kept me doing the job I love.

This job is not for everyone; when you are losing the "good" ones because of pay, that is disheartening.

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

Ann Homer

Teacher's Assistant

Children's Friend

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Elizabeth Gil and I am a Teacher at Love4All (Elmwood).

My name is Elizabeth Gil, and I've been working with children for over 20 years. I'm an educator because I'm passionate about seeing children grow and learn every day. As you know, this is one of the lowest-paying jobs. These bonuses have helped me make ends meet, pay the bills, and feed my daughter. Please help us get a better salary.

Mi nombre es Elizabeth Gil, tengo más de 20 años trabajando con niños. Soy educadora porque me apasiona ver los niños crecer y aprender todos los días. Como ya saben; este es uno de los trabajos menos pagados. Estos bonus me han ayudado a completar la renta, a pagar las facturas y alimentar a mi hija. Por favor de lograr un mejor sueldo para nosotras.

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

Elizabeth Gil

Teacher

Love4All (Elmwood)

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Elizabeth and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Friend.

I enjoy being a teacher's assistant because I like working with children, and what I like most is their spontaneity. Working with these little humans satisfies me, and I contribute to society.

These financial incentive programs have benefited me and my family since the cost of living has increased significantly, and they have helped us catch up with our monthly payments.

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

Elizabeth

Teacher's Assistant

Children's Friend

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Tina Harris and I am a Teacher at Over the Rainbow.

I've been so blessed with the help of a supplemented income from Step Up WAGE\$. I love the field I work in. I have 3 children with ADHD, and they are not eligible for daycare. With the CCAP grant I could work knowing my children were safe in an after-school setting. Thank you for funding these programs.

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

Tina Harris

Teacher

Over the Rainbow

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Pamela Guinn and I am a Teacher at Beautiful Beginnings.

I chose this profession many years ago; it allowed me to fulfill the ideas of building children up and preparing for the future. It helped me minimize some bills. I returned to school for my BA, which was challenging and expensive.

The WAGE\$ program helps make us feel respected and needed. Many people tend to look down on childcare workers and classify us as babysitters, but we are the base that prepares the children for the future.

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

Pamela Guinn

Teacher

Beautiful Beginnings

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Kristina Erbe and I am a Teacher at Cadence Academy Preschool in Smithfield.

I am an early childhood educator because I love seeing young children learn! I have been in this field for almost 12 1/2 years, and every day is different! I have taught in many different age groups, which are all different yet rewarding! I currently teach Kindergarten, and I love it! Seeing my students learn new things daily makes me feel like I'm doing my best!

The WAGE\$ program and its supplements have helped me in so many ways! I have been able to help my mom pay the bills, pay my bills, and take my mom on a fantastic trip for her 60th birthday, which I wouldn't have been able to afford any other way!

This funding is so necessary to me and many other childcare workers! Please continue to offer this funding! Early Childhood workers are so incredibly important to the development of young children!

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

Kristina Erbe

Teacher

Cadence Academy Preschool, Smithfield

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Yesenia Hayden and I am a Family Child Care Provider and Owner at Home Away From Home Day Care.

I'm an early childhood educator. I love caring for and educating children ages 0 to 5 and genuinely enjoy my job. In these difficult times, sometimes we don't have the capacity for the children we should have, and these programs help keep the daycare open. They help pay bills, purchase educational materials, educational games, and renew all the documents required to maintain an active license, among other things.

Soy educadora de la primera infancia. Me encanta cuidar y educar a los niños de 0 a 5 años y disfruto mucho mi trabajo. En estos momentos tan difíciles a veces uno no tiene la capacidad de niños que debe tener y estos programas ayudan a uno mucho para continuar teniendo la guardería abierta. Ayudan a pagar los billes, a comprar Materiales educativos, juegos educativos, y a renovar todo los documentos que se requieren para tener la licencia activa y más.

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

Yesenia Hayden

Family Child Care Provider and Owner

Home Away from Home Day Care

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Ebonee and I am a Teacher at Little Learners Academy.

I've been a teacher for 10 years and am in early childhood to give the students and people of Rhode Island the best possible academic start. As many know, being a professional, and having a degree in this field, requires the utmost professionalism toward families, students, and communities. Unfortunately, the pay does not support this profession.

My family benefited from the pandemic bonus as I was able to purchase enough food for my household, and did not feel the need to skip out on meals for myself. And with the Step Up to WAGE\$ supplement, I was able to catch up on past-due bills. At the time I was making \$19 an hour, which is not enough to live on.

The quality of early childhood education has transformed from past-time caretaking, into a quality analysis of each student's abilities, and inabilities, to hone in on specific supports and academic readiness for students entering primary grades. Because of these blessings, I worried less about my finances and was able to secure my household, allowing me to continue to serve our community and state as a quality early childhood educator.

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

Ebonee

Teacher

Little Learners Academy

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Erika and I am a Teacher at Joyful Learning Child Academy.

I have worked in Early Childhood Education for over 20 years now. It is what I went to school for and am passionate about doing. We NEED motivated, passionate teachers who have a drive to teach these young minds! Help our state teachers who work so hard daily by continuing this program. It is vital for teachers to be able to live a life off of one salary!

These programs significantly helped my family since teachers make such a pathetic wage. We need to significantly raise teachers' wages across the board in ALL age groups- especially when the teachers are educated or hold certain certifications and/or training. I have a teaching license in two states and can't survive on my paycheck. PLEASE keep these programs going to help the teachers who educate today's youth and work so hard daily!

I am a college graduate with a teaching license in two states. Even with this education AND two licenses, I cannot support my family! Help the teachers, PLEASE! We need these programs to continue!

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

Erika

Teacher

Joyful Learning Child Academy

May 15th, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am in strong support of House Finance Bill H5200, the Early Educator Workforce Act.

My name is Emily Franceschi and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare Cumberland.

I am 24 years old. This field is where I feel my heart is. I love nothing more than watching these children learn and grow. Seeing them reach their developmental goals makes the long days worth it. Seeing their faces light up when they see me means the world. I am here for the children. Knowing I am making a difference in their lives is a feeling I wish to share. Working with kids takes a special person, and this is a field you need to be so incredibly passionate about. This is what I was meant to do.

This WAGE\$ program has been excellent and has helped me out so much. I bring home roughly \$545 weekly if I work forty hours weekly. Once my bills and other financial obligations are resolved, I'm left with little to nothing at the end of each week. I live alone with my boyfriend, so my bills include rent, car insurance, car payments, electricity, etc. I am virtually living paycheck to paycheck, which causes me extreme stress, as emergencies can always arise. I babysit occasionally and as a way to earn some extra money, but not often enough to help me begin to save money. I am also contemplating donating plasma twice a week to help pay off my student loans because my bills are all becoming so expensive. It's becoming hard to afford life alone, and I am so afraid I will never make my way. The last WAGE\$ check I received allowed me to start my savings account, which has remained an amazing place since then. I can only imagine how grateful parents who work in this field would be to receive funds like this. We work incredibly hard for our money; this field is not easy, and being compensated for all our hard work makes us feel appreciated.

The early years are critical to a child's development, and this program is a way to help retain qualified staff. Wouldn't you want qualified individuals taking care of your child? This is a field you should want to be in and have a passion for. Sadly, this is not always the case because those who are qualified go elsewhere where they can make a better living for their families. The economy has been incredibly scary these past several years, and it's only worsening. Early education centers are losing qualified staff left and right because of the pay scale in these places. It's so hard to find staff for the building, so the teachers in these facilities are

overworked and underpaid. We hardly hear thank you, and nobody thinks of us as educators, so that can't be further from the truth. The children in my classroom learn so much daily, and keep in mind, I work with the youngest age group. These children are learning sign language, social and emotional skills, and developing their large and fine motor functions, and our teachers are contributing to so much of this development. The future of this world is in these centers, and they have the power to make a difference; this is why you need qualified and decent individuals in these places to help make that difference.

Remember that these kids are spending about forty hours a week with us. These children deserve qualified teachers; keeping this program going is one way to entice them to stay in the field. Please consider funding this program for the foreseeable future; it has made a difference for me and many others. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.**

Emily Franceschi

Teacher

Dr. Daycare Cumberland