

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 Cassandra Travis, and I am a Teacher and Administrator at Hamet Learning Center.

I am an early educator for toddlers, and I want to make a difference in my community. I do it not just as an educator but also as a positive influence in the lives of our youth. The salary supplement was a huge help. The childcare assistance allowed me to work and save on childcare expenses.

I have been in this field for 25 years. We do not make a lot of money as it is. We don't do it for the income; we do it for the outcome.

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

Cassandra Travis

Teacher and Administrator

Hamlet Learning Center

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 Victoria and I am a Teacher at Dr. Daycare Learning Center North Providence.

Starting in 2022, I would not have been where I am today. I am proud of my work and process through RIC for my Bachelor's Degree in ECED. The WAGE\$ program has helped me financially while being a full-time lead teacher and full-time student at RIC. I just closed on my first-ever home with my finances, and the programs that are offered to me helped me get here. They will continue to help me as I further my education in a career I love.

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

Victoria

Teacher

Dr. Daycare Learning Center North Providence

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 Brandon Tapley and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Smith Hill Childhood Learning Center.

I have been in this field since 2008, and I love it. I wouldn't change my profession for anything. It is amazing to see the children grow and how much they've grown as the school year progresses. The extra money has helped me pay some bills that I needed to catch up on and helped me save money for a new apartment. I am dedicated to my profession and have a passion for working with the youth and seeing our children grow.

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

Brandon Tapley

Teacher's Assistant

Smith Hill Childhood Learning Center

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 Celeste Thomason and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Today's Family Child Care.

I have been a childcare provider and educator for infants and toddlers for over 30 years. I have found it extremely challenging to deliver high-quality care without the financial support necessary to maintain and enhance our programs. This support is essential for operating effective childcare services and enabling providers, teachers, and experienced educators to advance their professionalism, education, and skills. Adequate financing and competitive wages are crucial for helping providers stay updated with technology, implement best practices in early childhood education, and adapt to social changes that require teachers not to deepen their knowledge in the field.

During the Covid pandemic, providing childcare to families was extremely challenging. This significantly impacted the liability of caring for children. Despite low enrollment, I kept my doors open and worked hard to ensure a safe environment for everyone; paying bills and providing nutritious meals for the children was difficult, and my family's financial situation suffered. Many of my family members face health issues due to COVID-19, making things even tougher.

Fortunately, the support I received through pandemic retention, bonuses, and Step Up to WAGE\$ helped me get my business back on track. Well, I haven't fully recovered. Thanks to Step Up to WAGE\$, I am moving in the right direction. Enrollment has increased, my schedule has returned to normal, and I have been able to pay off some overdue bills.

I urge policymakers and funders to recognize the critical importance of Step Up to WAGE\$ and grants for teachers, providers, and educators striving to succeed in the education sector. These vital resources not only support dedicated educators but also ensure that our youngest and most precious children receive the quality education they deserve. Investing in these measures empowers families who aspire for the best educational opportunities for their children while elevating the professionalism and quality of care available to all families in Rhode Island. Our

commitment to providing exceptional care is unwavering, and we are eager to continue our important work in this field. Your ongoing support is essential, not just for us, but for our children's future and our communities' well-being. Together, we can make a meaningful difference.

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

Celeste Thomason

Family Child Care Provider

Today's Family Child 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 Malissa Winfield and I am a Teacher at Children's Workshop.

I have been working at the Children's Workshop for 8 years, and I love my job. I love watching the children in my care grow and thrive, and to see them do new things; it gives me a warm feeling inside.

I am a mother of a 4-year-old little girl who has been going to daycare since she was 6 months old. When she first started going to daycare, my parents helped me with the payment for childcare. When they came out with free childcare for childcare workers, it was a big help it took the stress off me and the feeling of being a burden on my parents. The Step Up to WAGES and bonuses have helped me catch up on bills each time. Sometimes I think I need to look for a higher-paying job, but when I look at the toddlers in my care, I change my mind.

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

Malissa Winfield

Teacher

Children's Workshop

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 Aimee Sherman and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Charlestown Early Learning Center.

I have a story to share but, long story short, the financial help for early education teachers has made it possible for me to switch to and stay with a job I love in education instead of going back to a retail job that is unfulfilling and causes me to miss out on my own daughter's social life, sports and overall family time. With this help, my life and my family's are immeasurably improved, and I get to impact the lives of others every day. I could not keep my teaching job without this extra financial assistance. I could not do a job I love without this help.

Please know that these programs are making a real difference in the lives of people like me- a real Rhode Islander who wants to make a difference in education and gets to do so with your help.

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

Aimee Sherman

Teacher's Assistant

Charlestown Early Learning Center

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 Emma Villa and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Emma's Home Day Care.

All children must have the same educational opportunities in certified programs like Home Day Care, where children are prepared not only academically but also supported in their transitions and independence to begin a new school year. These economic vouchers have helped our programs continue to operate with the same quality since the costs of primary services such as rent, mortgages, electricity, and gas have risen so much that it is sometimes difficult to continue providing services, which is the reason some partners have closed their programs. I ask the politicians and funders of these funds to take into account that our children deserve to continue receiving a quality education and that our programs benefit from these funds to continue surviving.

Es muy importante, que todos los niños tengan las mismas oportunidades de educarse, en programas certificados como los Home Day careas, donde los niños se preparan no solo académicamente si no también se les apoya en sus transiciones, y su independencia para comenzar una nueva etapa escolar. Estos bonos económicos an ayudado a que nuestros programas sigan operando, con la misma calidad, ya que los costos de los servicios, primarios como renta, hipotecas, electricidad y gas, an subido tanto que a veces es difícil seguir dando servicio, es la razon que algunas compañeras an cerrado sus programas. Pido a los politicos y a los financiadores, de estos fondos que, tomen en cuenta que nuestros niños merecen seguir teniendo una educación de calidad y que nuestros programas se benefician de estos fondos para seguir subsistiendo.

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

Emma Villa

Family Child Care Provider

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 Virginia and I am a Teacher and Family Child Care Provider at Virginia's Home Day Care.

Our program is constantly evolving because we strive to maintain high-quality early childhood education, and antenatal care is difficult due to the constant turnover of assistants, as our salaries are low. We also have to maintain a professional curriculum, as it is expensive, and once again, we are limited by resources, working with children of different ages and needs.

Nuestro programa estamos en constante trabajo por que nos esforzamos por mantener buena calidad de education temprana y es dificil antenatal por el constante cambio de Asistente's, pues nuestro salario es bajo. Tambien tenemos el gestation de mantener un curriculum profesional ya que es caro y otra vez los recursos nos limitan pues trabajando con ninos de diferentes edades y necesidades.

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

Virginia

Teacher and Family Child Care Provider

Virginia's 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 Sarah Tejada and I am a Family Childcare Provider at New Beginnings Home Daycare.

As a family childcare provider with over 19 years of experience, I've seen firsthand how critical the early years are in shaping a child's future. Being an early childhood provider means more than just caring for children—laying the foundation for their lifelong learning, social-emotional growth, and overall well-being. It's a privilege to nurture, guide, and support children during these formative years, helping them build the confidence and skills they'll carry throughout their lives.

WAGE\$ has helped me by providing financial support and recognition for my work in early childhood education. The incentives make a meaningful difference by helping me cover personal expenses and feel more valued in my role. They also motivate me to continue growing professionally and staying committed to the field I love.

If funding and support for early childhood education do not continue, Rhode Island will face a growing teacher shortage, increased tuition rates, and the heartbreaking reality of many childcare programs being forced to close their doors due to rising costs. This will burden families overwhelmingly, limiting access to quality care during the most critical years of a child's development. Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive in a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment—this is not just a service; it's a necessity for our future.

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

Sarah Tejada

Family Child Care Provider

New Beginnings Home Day Care