

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 Cecelia de la Cruz and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Love4All Childcare.

I am an early childhood educator because I believe in the power of early childhood education to transform lives. My work involves providing a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment for children to develop their cognitive, emotional, and social skills. Every day, I support young children in their learning process, fostering curiosity, creativity, and self-confidence. Investing in early childhood education is investing in the future of our society. I am passionate about providing children with a solid foundation for their development and learning. Despite the challenges we face, I remain committed to my work because I know that quality early childhood education makes a significant difference in their lives. However, we need more support in terms of funding, resources, and better working conditions to ensure all children receive the care and education they deserve. Investing in early childhood education not only benefits children and their families but also strengthens our communities and the future of our country.

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

Mi nombre es Cecelia de la Cruz y soy asistente de maestra en Love4All Childcare.

Soy educador de la primera infancia porque creo en el poder de la educación temprana para transformar vidas. Mi trabajo consiste en brindar un ambiente seguro, estimulante y enriquecedor para que los niños desarrollen sus habilidades cognitivas, emocionales y sociales. Cada día, apoyo a los más pequeños en su proceso de aprendizaje, fomentando la curiosidad, la creatividad y la confianza en sí mismos. Invertir en la educación infantil es invertir en el futuro de nuestra sociedad. Me apasiona brindar a los niños una base sólida para su desarrollo y aprendizaje. A pesar de los desafíos que enfrentamos, sigo comprometido con mi labor porque sé que una educación de calidad en la primera infancia marca una diferencia significativa en sus vidas. Sin embargo, necesitamos más apoyo en términos de financiamiento, recursos y mejores condiciones laborales para garantizar que todos los niños reciban la atención y educación que

merecen. Invertir en la educación temprana no solo beneficia a los niños y sus familias, sino que también fortalece nuestras comunidades y el futuro de nuestro país.

Quiero agradecerles por tomarse el tiempo de leer mi testimonio. **¡POR FAVOR, APRUEBEN ESTE PROYECTO DE LEY!**

Cecilia de la Cruz  
Teacher's Assistant  
Love4All Childcare

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 Jillian Cinquantii, and my role as a lead toddler teacher is unique, delicate, and wholesome. And for me, it's desirable and important as well. When I had my son 19 years ago, we had the most amazing childcare teachers and centers. I wanted nothing more than to be involved and active in any event and or activity they had. I enjoyed seeing the connections happen from a different set of lenses, and shortly after, I made the life-altering decision to join the childcare workforce. In due time, other opportunities came about; therefore, I decided to move up and out to explore those other options.

I am still a Lead Toddler teacher 18 years later, and that's not without sharing that I got here after gaining access to many free and low-cost training certificates and educational opportunities led by the state and/or grant programs.

I've had a great run and played many roles in my current job, but the last few years have been the most challenging. These range from complexities regarding more children and families that have a significant amount of unmet needs both mentally, emotionally, physically, and financially. Our jobs have become even more complex and now critical than ever - whether I am referring to being present, aware, observational, accessible, open, supportive, flexible, understanding, knowledgeable, collaborative, empathetic, compassionate, caring, and more. Now, if you multiply this by however many children you have that come from completely different backgrounds, needs, approaches, etc., and more on top of whatever policies and procedures are set in place to safeguard, it is overwhelming. Evolution will happen whether we like it or not and whether it's warranted, and access to competent and capable individuals like myself can be far between because of the pay alone. I have often looked outside my line of work because my contributions don't match society's needs and inflation. Various things happened in my life that have contributed to my role now, and I wouldn't have it any other way! I have to continue my work. Kids need people like me to be their eyes and ears, to set forth and guide them in nurturing educational, accessible environments.

I didn't mention that I am a good advocate and liaison, taking pride in helping others bridge the gaps. We all have the opportunity to do such. We just have to have quality centers like the one I am in now offering competitive wages to obtain and retain quality staff in such a high turnover

world. I participated in almost all of the programs before and during COVID-19 to assist and support those working in the field. I can confidently tell you I would not be here or continuing this work without these programs, specifically WAGE\$ and the wage supplements. It was not just needed but rewarding and re-triggered internal initiative to continue this much-needed work.

I have 2 children, ages 19 & a new 5 year old. The cost differential of their needs then and now is tremendously grotesque. Even though I am still childbearing, I would never want to have another child ever again. It's unaffordable and overwhelming. I struggled to make discounted payments towards my child's care payments as it meant I had to choose food or payments; it was terrible, depressing, overwhelming, and embarrassing. I felt ashamed to ask or express my need for more support. I was beginning to resent being in this field and caring for other children when I could barely afford to have my son in the care of others at the same center. The staff pilot must be a separate program, accessible to eligible staff for these very reasons, in addition to retaining qualified staff. By doing so, things are full circle, and I can be available, present, and supportive to the children I work with and their families.

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

Jillian Cinquantii

Lead Toddler Teacher

CCF Center Woonsocket

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 Christine Audette, and I am a Teacher at Wood River Preschool.

I love children and feel they deserve good, loving people to teach them. I have always wanted to be a teacher, and I believe that what children learn while they are young makes a lasting impression on them and helps shape who they will become. Building a solid foundation for their futures and helping them become good and productive members of the community in which they will live. I have worked at Wood River for twenty years and love my job. I am a mom of three and a Grandma of four, and I know how much other great teachers have helped my family.

Receiving the WAGE\$ supplements was a godsend in my life. Situations at home have made me cut my work hours, adding to the financial strain in my life. It has helped a great deal. It has helped us pay some bills, and every little bit of money helps.

It is frustrating to know I could work at McDonald's and make more money than I am now. Working with the country's future should be considered one of the most important roles, and we should be paid accordingly. Teachers are a critical element and the foundation for a child's continuing success going forward in their life. Our jobs are important and should be looked upon as such. Teachers are an essential part of all children's lives. Please help us stay in the jobs we love by financially helping us do so.

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

Christina Audette

Teacher

Wood River Preschool

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 Romero and I am the Education Director at Federal Hill House Early Learning Center in the Federal Hill Area in Providence.

It has been a great opportunity for quite a few of my staff to receive this benefit. Times have changed, and the help is very much appreciated. We are a non-profit organization, and we pay only \$18 an hour for the teacher position, and I know for a fact that it is not a salary that anyone can live on.

It is well known that early childhood educators do not make the money they are supposed to. We provide children from 6 weeks to 5 years of age the opportunity to build their foundation of knowledge, we provide them with nurturing lives experiences, they speak because there is a teacher who talks to them for 9 hours in a day, show them patience, teach them how to take turns, and open to many possibilities in life. Everything starts at a young age, their brain develops in the very first three years of life. My teachers have a background in Early Childhood Education and have many years of experience. We provide quality services, we serve families and children with different backgrounds, we collaborate with DCYF, we help their families to stay together, or we reunite them. My staff is making this possible, sharing their knowledge in child development with families, and meeting with them quarterly has impacted most of the families we serve.

Federal Hill House teachers and staff make it possible to not only educate children and their families, but also bring hope. It has been a great opportunity for them to be considered for. The retention of my staff is higher because of this. Please help us to spread the word, Early Childhood Education needs to settle for better pay rates. Children can not wait to be taught.

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

Pamela F. Romero  
Education Director  
Federal Hill 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 April, and I am a Director at Scituate Early Learning Center.

I am a Director and earn just under \$17 an hour. My team members earn less and love their positions working with children, but they are not living wages. The bonuses have profoundly impacted my Team by helping them get through with rising prices. In my center, the only one who qualifies for the Step Up To WAGE\$ is the center's owner. More funding should be provided for this program so that more people can qualify and receive wage supplements.

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

April

Director

Scituate 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 Christine, and I am a Teacher at Tricounty Head Start.

I am an Early Head Start Teacher for the Tri-County Community Action Head Start Program. I have been an employee of Tri-County for 26 years. My dedication to Tri-County Head Start means I love helping children and their families. However, financially, it is not always easy for my family to survive at my hourly rate. Even after many years working as a teacher for the same program, I still only make a little over minimum wage. I have questioned whether I should give up my love of teaching and helping the community members so I can work a different job just to make ends meet. Please help support Early Childhood Teachers by providing the Step Up WAGE\$ program. It allows me to make a positive difference while doing what I love.

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

Christine

Teacher

Tri-County Community Action Head Start



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 Sandra Ashe, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Child Inc.

I love working with preschoolers. They are at an age where they are still curious about the world around them. They are also developing their social skills. I feel it's essential to guide them toward becoming independent adults, and it starts when they are young.

The WAGES program has helped me keep my bills paid and not have to get multiple jobs. Economic prices have risen, but our paychecks have not. I've had to cut many corners to survive, and this program has significantly helped.

I was in Head Start back in 1965—one of the first pilot programs. I graduated high school and went back and got my associate's degree. I then went back to teach what I love. Not many can say that.

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

Sandra Ashe

Teacher's Assistant

Child Inc.

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 Diana Alves, and I am a Teacher at Creative Early Learning Center.

I've been a preschool teacher at this center for 4 years. I enjoy working, and educating my little friends every day is a new adventure, and I would like to continue being part of such a fantastic workforce.

The WAGE\$ program is an excellent incentive and has greatly helped my finances. In the current circumstances, it is hard to survive when the cost of living is so expensive, and the money I am currently making is insufficient for a decent life.

Even if I love working with kids, it is not always profitable financially. If this program ends, I'll be forced to quit my job and look for other venues that pay more. I don't think this industry is going to last for much longer. In my center, we have employees who don't last even a week, and they say that if they work somewhere else, they will get paid more. How can we move forward like this? We can't.

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

Diana Alves

Teacher

Creative 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 Maria Alvarez, and I am a Teacher at Woonsocket Head Start.

I started working as a teacher's aide as a young mother and became a teacher assistant. Through the years, I continued my education while I worked in the program, allowing me the flexibility to work and study. I also graduated with my associate's degree in early childhood in 2017. I decided to continue my education in this field, and now I'm almost done completing my bachelor's degree in elementary and early childhood education. It has opened new doors for me and my family. I am an early childhood educator because I feel that children need to learn and have a head start on their learning process, as they learn, grow, and develop these critical relationships and developmental skills. I also feel that having that positive relationship with the children, parents, and families will help to keep that transition smooth so that they can move forward in the future, knowing that they are prepared with the skills for elementary school readiness. When I heard one of my past students was student of the month, I spoke about what early childhood education can do for us and the community.

WAGE\$ and its supplements have helped and supported my career and life. They have helped me and my family grow financially at home and for basic needs.

I would like to share that thanks to these programs, many early childhood educators are doing well and are getting by in their lives. They can continue their careers as they have been doing for many years. Some can work and have a load off their shoulders to care for their families at home. Some can provide for their families with their basic needs without worrying about where their next meal will come from, paying a bill, or paying a student loan.

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

Maria Alvarez

Teacher

Woonsocket Head Start

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 Dilorenzo and I am a Teacher at Progressive Learning for Children.

I love working with children. I love helping them learn and grow. I am a toddler teacher. The money from the WAGE\$ program has helped me pay my bills. It has helped me to be able to afford to buy food and essentials. This is a challenging, important, and rewarding job that does deserve the money from this program. We are helping to raise the children of the future!

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

Sarah Dilorenzo

Teacher

Progressive Learning Center