

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 Perla Perez and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Turner Early Headstart Riverside Providence.

I am a passionate and dedicated early childcare provider. I love engaging with families and supporting their children's developmental goals. Being able to help build a child's confidence and create trusting relationships is an honor. Children coming into early childcare is usually their first experience in a structured learning environment. Providing social and emotional support is a foundational piece that children need to be successful in life!!

Step Up WAGE\$ has been extremely helpful to my family and me. My current salary provides me the means to pay the bills, but it is not enough for me to also save money on the side. Early childcare providers are not paid enough for all the work we put into our jobs. We are shaping the minds of children and supporting families every day. This money helped me feel seen by others and that I was being rewarded for our time and dedication. Compensation is needed. The economy is not getting any better.

I'd like to continue to pursue my education in teaching, and the additional money from Step Up to WAGE\$ would be extremely helpful.

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

Perla Perez

Teacher's Assistant

Turner Early HeadStart Riverside 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 Wendy Rose and I am a Teacher at Heritage Park Early Learning Center.

I've been working in the early childhood education field for over 27 years. When I was younger, I chose this field for many reasons. The main reason why is quite a cliché. I BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN IS OUR FUTURE! I've worked with children from infants to kindergarten. I've worked with toddlers for the past 3-4 years. (Not too many teachers enjoy this age group) I love this group for a few reasons. This is where they learn to communicate (talking) and self-help skills, like using utensils, hand washing, potty training, and so much more.

It's not an easy job by any means and requires teachers to have a lot of patience and caring. I certainly knew that I wasn't going to get rich in this field, but I did expect to be able to get by.

I do this job because I can honestly say I love my job! I love it when parents thank us when they hear their child talking, saying new or more complex words. Keep in mind these children come to us at 18 months old. Most of them have generally 3 words: Mama, Dada, and Baba. When the child learns something new, and the look on their face. It's absolutely amazing. Although I knew that I was not going to get rich in this field, I thought it would be decent enough to live. That is not the case right now and hasn't been for quite some time. It's discouraging to hear that someone working in a fast-food restaurant gets paid more than my occupation. Nowadays, it seems it's just getting worse. Rents were soaring; my rent increase was 250.00 per month, plus another 250.00 to tack on the security deposit. Everything is going up, yet our pay isn't.

So, with that being said. Thank you for those grants - I was able to just get by. It definitely helped my family financially.

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

Wendy Rose

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 Madison Mullins and I am a Teacher at Lincoln Learning Preschool and Daycare.

I am 24 years old and graduated from RIC in 2022 with a degree in Early Childhood Education. I have always had a passion for working with children, having grown up watching my mother be a lead preschool teacher. Being a safe, nurturing, positive space for my students has always been my biggest priority, and I love my students more than I could express in words.

I am an only child, and the only family in my life is my mother, who, as of 2022, has suffered several medical emergencies and diagnoses, leaving her medically disabled and out of work. It became my job to be the sole provider in my household for me and my mother, which quickly became an intense financial burden. My bills were piling up, my car completely died, and I had to take out a loan to afford a used vehicle, along with thousands in credit card debt from trying to get by. Receiving a supplement from WAGE\$ was the biggest blessing I couldn't ever ask for, and it has given me the greatest gift of having savings to fall back on. This organization has helped so many people like myself who would never be able to get by without it. I will always be grateful to have been a part of it and hope that, with all my heart, it can continue to help even more people.

These funds are life-changing for educators like us who have nowhere else to go; please fight to continue helping so many more people and families who need it the most.

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

Madison Mullins

Teacher

Lincoln Learning Preschool and Daycare

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 Mello and I am a Teacher at The Curious Child.

I always knew I wanted to work with children but never knew how. I started working in childcare with toddlers in 2020, and I have remained at the same center since. I love my job and position, but my favorite part is watching them grow and being a part of their milestones.

I love my job, but it has become difficult to pay my bills when they are due or even go grocery shopping some weeks. WAGE\$ has helped me with a little extra money coming in while also feeling rewarded for all my hard work.

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

Victoria Mello

Teacher

The Curious Child

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 Robin Perry and I am a Teacher at Nina's Home Daycare.

This program has helped me financially so that I don't have to work two jobs and spend time with my son; I can also work on my self-care to be a better woman, mom, and teacher for children who need education and nurturing. This job takes place daily and keeps me grounded at my job, which eliminates staff turnover over children's consistency. Please continue to fund this program, as it is one of the only things keeping me afloat with wage supplements.

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

Robin Perry

Teacher

Nina's Home Daycare

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 Nina Ortiz and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Smith Hill ECLC.

I am an Early Educator because young children must have access to learning while developing relationships with peers. It has always been so important to me that I become a positive influence in the lives of all children in my presence because I always wanted to be the person I needed when I was a young child.

Unfortunately, as many of us do, we live paycheck to paycheck, often wondering if we'll make it to the next paycheck. Because I received benefits from the Retention Bonus and the Step up to WAGE\$ supplement, I could afford transportation to and from my employment as well as groceries, notably, those that are a healthy option for myself and my family.

I love my job; I love what I do daily. I love that I get to observe and positively influence the minds of young children, the future leaders of our world. Unfortunately, we all know that being employed in education doesn't come with a paycheck matching the work and dedication. That is why I am beyond thankful for receiving the support provided. Not only did it take some weight off my financial status, but it also made me feel as if I was worth it for a while.

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

Ninz Ortiz

Teacher's Assistant

Smith Hill ECLC

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 Gina Molis and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Smith Hill Early Learning Center State Pre-K.

I have been an early educator for 34 years and can't imagine doing anything else. I have had the pleasure of teaching and caring for many students who are now parents who entrust me to care for their little ones.

The Step Up to WAGE program was so helpful, especially with the rising cost of living. I would like the General Assembly to recognize the important role of an early educator. We wear many hats during the course of our day.

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

Gina Molis

Teacher's Assistant

Smith Hill Early Learning Center State Pre-K

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 Altagracia Polanco and I am a Family Child Care Provider at Learning World Home Day Care.

I like to say that without that help, I couldn't continue working because not too many parents qualified for child care, so my program was affected. The most important matter is that, as educators, we need support to continue giving care and education to the children who come to our programs.

As I said before, the WAGE\$ program was so helpful and important as an educator; it helped me to continue paying my mortgage and utility bills. It also helped me continue doing my program job without giving up its quality.

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

Altagracia Polanco

Family Child Care Provider

Learning World 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 Denise Polanco and I am a Family Child Care Provider and Owner at Peace of Mind Home Day Care.

My name is Denise Polanco, and I run a home daycare center. I love teaching young children. They need to be cared for with love, respect, and empathy. I truly enjoy caring for children's mental health, always providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for their overall development. I offer cognitive, emotional, physical, and verbal support to children so they can continue to grow and develop in the healthiest way possible.

The aforementioned programs have helped me greatly because I was able to purchase several things I needed to improve my daycare center, including educational toys that have greatly helped the children. I was able to enclose my patio so the children can play outdoors more freely and safely.

I would like you to know that I am a very responsible provider who uses the necessary resources to improve areas of the daycare center as needed. I also invest heavily to ensure that all children's play is educational, so they learn in a healthy, happy, and appropriate way.

Mi nombre es Denise Polanco y tengo un home daycare. Me gusta mucho enseñarle a los niños pequeños, siento que ellos necesitan ser cuidado con amor, respeto y empatía. Me gusta mucho cuidar la salud mental de los niños, siempre proporcionando un ambiente seguro, sano y saludable para su desarrollo integral. Le ofrezco apoyo cognitivo, emocional, físico y verbal a los niños para que puedan seguir creciendo y desarrollándose de la manera más sana posible.

Los programas mencionados anteriormente me han ayudado bastante porque pude comprar varias cosas que necesitaba para mejorar mi guardería, cosas que han ayudado mucho a los niños, juguetes educativos, pude cerrar mi patio para que los niños jueguen con mayor libertad al aire libre y mayor seguridad.

Me gustaría que supieran que soy una proveedora muy responsable que usa los recursos

necario para mejorar areas de la guarderia segun sea necesario. Tambien que invierto mucho para asegurarme que todos los juegos de los niños sean educativos, para que aprendan de una manera sana, feliz y apropiada.

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

Denise Polanco

Family Child Care Provider and Owner

Peace of Mind 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 Lisette Nunez, and I am a Family Child Care Provider at a home day care.

I have worked as an early childhood educator with infants and toddlers for 20 years. I love my job. It gives me great satisfaction to see the children's progress in my care, and even more so when I have contributed to that progress. Safety, emotional well-being, nutrition, etc., are the most important things for me. I work directly with families so they feel welcomed and comfortable in the program. My program is free, racism is non-existent, and the staff is friendly and fully involved with the families and children.

Financially, it helps a lot. It complements our pay for our work, since sometimes we have children, and sometimes only a few. Children leave the program for different reasons: they start school, families move to another city, or many families simply lose their jobs. The program helps minimize expenses such as rent, electricity, and also helps with what is needed for the program, such as school supplies, cleaning products, food, and snacks for the children.

Please continue to support us financially. The aid funds are much needed and help the program continue to operate, and parents have a safe, stable, and clean place to leave their children.

Tengo 20 años laborando con educadora de la primera infancia, me gusta mi trabajo, me satisface enormemente ver el progreso de los niños en mis cuidados y más cuando yo he contribuido a ese progreso, para mí la seguridad, el bienestar emocional, la alimentación, etc., es lo más importante, trabajo directamente con las familias para que se sientan bienvenidos al programa y cómodos, mi programa es libre, no existe el racismo, el personal es amable y está absolutamente involucrado con las familias y los niños.

Financieramente ayudo bastante, es un complemento al pago por nuestro trabajo, ya que a veces tenemos niños y a veces pocos niños, los niños salen del programa por diferentes razones, empiezan la escuela, las familias se mudan de ciudad, o simplemente muchas familias pierden su trabajo, el programa ayuda a minimizar los gastos como renta, luz, electricidad, como también; ayudan para lo que se necesita para el programa, ejemplo útiles escolares,

producto de limpieza ,comida y merienda para los niños.

Sigan apoyando financieramente .Los fondos de ayuda son muy necesarios y ayuda a que el programa continúe laborando. y los padres tengan un lugar seguro ,estable y limpio donde pueden dejar sus hijos.

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

Lisette Nunez

Family Child Care Provider

Home Day Care