

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 Roshona Perry, and I am a Teacher at Joyful Noise Inc.

I work as an early childhood educator because I want to be a massive part of our future. I love what I do and that I have such a critical part in the future of our children and the next generation. My students are like my children, and I want to do what is best for each and every one of them.

The WAGE\$ supplements have helped me catch up on past bills as well as help me pay some of my student loans. Not only has that helped me with those things, but it's also helped me put money aside for my son's future.

I am a mom to a smart, outgoing 1-year-old. Before daycare, my son was staying with a family member. I am lucky enough to have some help, but I always hit a crossroads when one of my helpers was sick or couldn't take him. That caused me to call out of work and miss out on pay or use sick time. With this extra money, I got to send my son to daycare, where he has FLOURISHED. I would be DEVASTATED if my son couldn't attend daycare anymore because this program ended. The price for care is so high that I would find myself working just to be able to send my son to daycare, leaving me with little to nothing to pay my bills and afford groceries and other things my son needs.

These programs have helped me greatly, and I'm sure they have helped others. If I couldn't send my son to daycare, I don't know if I could stay at my job, and we need all the childcare workers we can get. This is for the future. Think about the future when you make the decisions for the next step.

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

Roshona Perry

Teacher

Joyful Noise 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 Erica Pollitt, and I work at Countryside Children Center.

I love working with children. It's a joy to watch the children as they realize they can do something on their own. This job also keeps me young and close to my grandchildren living in another state.

The Step Up to WAGE\$ program has helped keep up with everything as everything constantly increases. It has also allowed me to take a trip with my children without worrying about where the money will come from and not charging a credit card.

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

Erica Pollitt

Countryside Children 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 Luz Ocasio and I am a Teacher at Beautiful Beginnings.

I relocated to Rhode Island on August 1, 2020, amid the pandemic. My husband and I moved to support my daughter, who had just graduated from Johnson and Wales University and was employed at the Cheesecake Factory, which had to close due to the crisis. I resigned from my 13-year position at Greater Bergen for Head Start in Paterson, NJ. My husband's job also ended, initially challenging our transition to Rhode Island. I began working at Beautiful Beginnings on September 14, 2020, and over the course of four years, I advanced to the role of Lead Infant Teacher. While I had opportunities to work elsewhere, my passion lies in early education. I am truly grateful for the chance to be part of the Beautiful Beginnings team during such a challenging period for my family and me.

Thanks to the support from the WAGE\$ program, my family and I have been able to manage our bills and save for the future. However, with the daily increase in prices for essential items, the bonuses have been crucial in helping us stay on top of our expenses. We haven't had to borrow from family or face tough choices between buying food and keeping the lights on.

I am grateful for your support, which allows us to keep working with children and families. In today's world, we must nurture young minds from an early age, especially considering the pressures that families face. Without this funding, many teachers would be forced to take on second jobs to make ends meet or even leave teaching altogether for less fulfilling jobs that simply pay the bills.

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

Luz Ocasio

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 Altagracia Polanco, and I am a Family Childcare Provider.

As you know, I am a childcare provider for infants and toddlers who went to college to learn how to teach the children who get into my program and serve low-income families who need care for their children. These parents need to be able to go to work knowing that their children are in good hands and they don't have to fear anything because I am an educator with the appropriate education to do the job. The WAGE\$ program allows me to continue to work in my program.

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

Altagracia Polanco

Family Childcare 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 Rachael Pina, and I am a Teacher at First Years Early Learning Center.

I have taught infants and toddlers at First Years for almost 25 years. Yes, the bonuses help me out with my finances, but I love my job. I would do this job with or without the bonuses, but I do appreciate them; the wage supplements are so helpful with my everyday expenses! Every day, I go home and think, It was a great day. It's tough sometimes, but I love teaching these young children! It is the best feeling ever!

The WAGES program has been so helpful, and it just so happens that every time a bonus comes, it's super needed! It's my catch-up time for bills! I appreciate it and hope it continues; it is needed!

Teachers work very hard! The bonus program helps keep people working in childcare because working in childcare is not paid well; this is a job you need to love, not to make money! I love it, but extra money always helps!

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

Rachael Pina

Preschool Teacher

First Years 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 Stephanie Parent, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Cranston Child Development Center.

These WAGE\$ bonuses have helped fix things in my home, allowed for college savings and car repairs, and helped my family financially. These funds are a gift; they help education in ways not seen daily; taking them away will harm, not good.

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

Stephanie Parent

Teacher's Assistant

Cranston Child Development 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 Renee Pepler, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Progressive Learning for Children.

I genuinely enjoy working with children and feel I'm an asset to the classroom and program I'm a part of. I appreciate the interaction with students, parents, and co-workers. It is challenging yet so very rewarding on many levels. As educators/ caregivers, we provide a service crucial to the next generations.

The money awarded to childcare workers through WAGE\$ was such a financial help. We all work in a very low-paying field. Yet without educators and childcare, where would the rest of the working force be? Who would care for the children?! Parents need help, and we, as caregivers, provide a much-needed position.

We barely make enough to cover monthly bills. The grant money has helped me as a single mom continue to provide for the families at Progressive and my own children.

I advocate for all of us who provide a service that is needed. We do one of the most challenging jobs (ask any parent who has spent 10 minutes in a preschool/daycare classroom). We deserve to be given restitution for our hard work. The grant helped with that. I would ask that we be recognized for ALL that we do. Please continue the program.

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

Renee Pepler

Teacher's Assistant

Progressive Learning for Children

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 Shayla Perry, and I am a Teacher at Love 4 All Learning Center on Eddy Street.

I am an early childhood educator for infants and toddlers because I love working with children, and I want to be a part of giving them quality education. Step Up to WAGE\$ allowed me to save money and clear the debt from the pandemic. I care about my children, and getting the extra money encourages me to continue working harder towards my career.

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

Shayla Perry

Teacher

Love 4 All Learning Center Eddy Street

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 Ashima Pierre, and I am a Teacher and Education Coordinator at Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center.

I have been in early education since I graduated from college in 2012. At first, this was just a job to me, but as I continued in this field, I realized that it was more than just a job... it was my calling. Being in early education as a black teacher, I impacted my community. I helped children not only learn and grow, but I also helped them build their identity. I helped them learn to love who they are. Being their first point of contact before entering school put me in a position to set these children up for success in their future.

Early education is essential to building well-rounded children who will lead this country in the future. Our work is not easy, and the requirements to be in this field are not a minor task. Our wages-to-economy ratio is horrible. We barely make enough to maintain an above-poverty level. Programs such as Step Up to WAGE\$ helped us keep our homes, pay our bills, put food on our tables, and care for our children's necessities.

I hope these programs continue because that will be the only way to keep excellent and qualified teachers in this field.

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

Ashima Pierre

Teacher and Education Coordinator

Beautiful Beginnings Child Care 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 Robin Perry, and I am a Teacher at Nina's Home Day Care.

I'm so grateful for these programs, the experience, and the education. The extra money from WAGE\$ helps me make ends meet. It helps me become a better teacher, support other educators, and provide better education to the children who count on us to educate and support them in their educational journey. This program should continue so these outstanding teachers and students can gain more knowledge and confidence and expand to reach more families in our community.

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

Robin Perry

Teacher

Nina's Home Day Care