



Mayor of Providence

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Brett P. Smiley

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street,  
Providence RI, 02903

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 5196, *An Act Relating to Human Services – The Rhode Island Works Program*. If passed, this legislation will eliminate the sunset on the Child Care for Child Care Educators program, which provides childcare subsidies for eligible childcare educators, remove the family income limit, and expand the program to include early intervention educators.

Rhode Island established the Child Care for Child Care Educators program in August 2023, and it is currently set to expire in July 2025 without action from the General Assembly. H5196 will benefit families and childcare providers alike while strengthening Rhode Island's early education workforce as we work toward the goal of expanding to 5,000 pre-kindergarten seats by 2028. A childcare educator in the state spends nearly half of their income on care for their own children—forcing many to leave the field to care for their families. Early intervention programs have also faced persistent staffing shortages. This bill will address both issues by expanding the Child Care for Child Care Educators program to include early intervention educators. By removing the household income cap, it will also increase the number of childcare educators eligible for these vital subsidies.

As Mayor of Providence, I am committed to filling every available childcare seat. Across the city, childcare centers are being forced to close classrooms—especially infant and toddler rooms—due to staff shortages. Providers have made it clear that the Child Care for Child Care Educators program has helped them retain staff and keep classrooms open. Extending and expanding this program will offer much-needed relief to educators with young children and support providers who struggle to maintain staffing levels. If passed, this bill will help Providence maintain and increase the number of available childcare seats.

I commend Representative Diaz for her leadership in championing this critical program and respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,

  
Brett P. Smiley  
Mayor