



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

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Subject: Support for H-5281 – Rhode Island Childcare Is Essential Act

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, which represents over 7,000 healthcare and service workers across Rhode Island—including approximately 450 family child care providers—we respectfully urge your support for H-5281, the Rhode Island Childcare Is Essential Act.

This legislation takes long-overdue steps to strengthen the state's childcare assistance program by expanding eligibility to meet the federal benchmark, aligning with national best practices. H-5281 would ensure that more low- and moderate-income working families—especially those just above the current income cutoffs—can access affordable childcare and remain in the workforce.

The families our members serve are often working parents who need care during nontraditional hours and on tight budgets. And many of our members are working parents themselves, struggling to afford care despite working full-time jobs in nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, and family child care settings. For them, affordable childcare isn't a luxury—it's what makes it possible to keep their jobs, pay their bills, and provide stability for their children.

Expanding access to childcare not only supports working families, it also strengthens our economy and helps ensure that early educators—especially in home-based care—can fill more openings and grow their programs. When families can afford care, providers can keep their doors open.

We urge you to pass H-5281 and help build a more equitable and functional childcare system in Rhode Island—one that truly supports both families and the providers they rely on.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Alex Moore
Political Director, SEIU 1199NE