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Subject: Support for H-5196, H-5197, and H-5992 – Child Care and Economic Stability for Working Families

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, which represents 7,000 healthcare and service workers across Rhode Island—including 450 family child care providers—we strongly support H-5196, H-5197, and H-5992.

Our members are child care providers, hospital workers, nursing home caregivers, and home care aides—primarily women of color who live in the same communities they serve. These bills directly support their ability to care for their own families while continuing to care for others.

H-5196 would eliminate the sunset on child care assistance for eligible child care educators and staff. This support allows our child care members to stay in the field, continue serving families, and avoid impossible trade-offs between their jobs and their children's needs.

H-5197 would remove the requirement that families cooperate with child support enforcement to receive child care assistance. This punitive rule puts families—often women escaping difficult relationships—in an impossible bind. Our members see this firsthand. No parent should be forced to choose between personal safety and child care.

H-5992 would eliminate the waiting period for lawful permanent residents to access benefits under the RI Works program. Many of our members are immigrants or serve immigrant families, and this unnecessary waiting period hurts those who are contributing, working, and trying to build stable lives. Rhode Island should not be punishing people for their immigration status—especially those who are raising young children.

Together, these bills support a more equitable system—one that recognizes and respects the realities of low-wage workers, immigrants, and caregivers. They remove harmful barriers, expand access to essential benefits, and allow our members to continue providing the care that Rhode Island families rely on.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Alex Moore

Political Director, SEIU 1199NE