

Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **HB7317: An Act Relating to Education—Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

My name is Hilda L. Serrano, and I have been a family child care provider for 24 years. I am writing to share how the WAGE\$ supplement has positively impacted my life and the quality of care I provide.

Thanks to WAGE\$, I was able to purchase new equipment and updated learning materials for the children in my care. These resources have helped me create a more engaging and developmentally appropriate environment. I also used the additional income to buy new rugs, which improved the comfort and safety of my space.

In addition, the supplement helped me cover important utility expenses, which can be a significant financial burden. I was also able to update my playground and purchase outdoor toys, giving the children more opportunities for physical activity, exploration, and play.

WAGE\$ has made a meaningful difference not only for me but also for the families and children I serve. If I were to stop receiving this supplement, it would be much more difficult to maintain the same level of quality in my program and keep up with necessary improvements and expenses.

I am truly grateful for this support and respectfully urge you to continue funding WAGE\$ so providers like myself can continue offering high-quality care to young children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Hilda L. Serrano

Family Child Care Provider (24 years)