

Chris O'Brien

From: Denise Polanco <peaceofminddaycare23@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 11:59 AM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: My Testimony

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I am writing to express my strong support for HB7317: An Act Relating to Education — Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act, which continues funding for the WAGE\$ program.

As a family child care provider, I work every day to support young children and working families in my community. I am currently on the waiting list to receive WAGE\$ funding, which shows how urgently early educators need this support.

My assistant receives WAGE\$ supplements, and these bonuses are essential. They allow me to compete with salaries in other fields and help prevent educators from leaving early childhood education for higher-paying jobs. Without programs like WAGE\$, retaining qualified staff becomes extremely difficult.

Supporting WAGE\$ means supporting children, families, and the stability of the early childhood workforce. I respectfully urge you to support HB7317 and continue investing in early educators.

Sincerely,

Denise Polanco
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