



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
Start

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 Jessica Vargas, and I work as a preschool teacher at Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center. Because of the wage supplement, I have been better able to pay my bills (electric, water, phone, etc). I have been better able to address my family's basic needs (food/housing). I have been better able to address my family's transportation needs (gas, auto insurance, car payments, car repairs, etc.). I have been better able to address the health needs of my family (medical bills, insurance, medications). I have used my supplement to help pay for child care costs. I have used my supplement to provide additional resources for my classroom or child care program.

This benefit helps a little. But also, a little goes a long way. It makes me feel recognized and acknowledged. My work in my classroom is important to the families I serve. I always show my class the same appreciation. It'll be great if the funding continues. We are essential to the children we serve.

Sincerely,

Jessica Vargas