



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 Kristina Bowers, and I am a Pre-K Teaching Assistant at Connecting for Children and Families. I was able to pay down financial debts due to low-income wages and improve my family's living conditions.

I was also financially secure, which influenced my decision to seek additional or alternative employment, allowing me to remain with my current employer, where I have worked for 8 years.

I think this program incentivizes educators to continue their education while also relieving the financial burden educators may be experiencing. This program recognizes the importance of educators receiving a living wage. This financial supplement program recognizes teachers who make an effort to obtain and continue their education but are not receiving an income that reflects their dedication to applying best practices in educating our future generations.

Sincerely,

Kristina Bowers