



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 Laurie McElwain, and I am a teacher at Blessed Sacrament School. In a profession that is grossly underpaid, it is crucial to keep good teachers in the classroom. I've been a PreK teacher for almost 30 years. With the cost of living rising while my salary barely changes, I might have to leave the profession I love to make ends meet. Getting the supplemental pay has allowed me to continue teaching.

Sincerely,

Laurie McElwain