



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I support House Bill 7393, *An Act Relating to Human Services – The Rhode Island Childcare Is Essential Act*, and House Bill 7319, *An Act Relating to Human Services – The Rhode Island Works Program*. If passed, these bills will expand eligibility for the State’s childcare subsidy program to serve more families and early childhood educators and will also help stabilize the early childhood field through higher reimbursement rates for providers.

House Bill 7393 will make childcare more affordable by expanding eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to families with an annual income up to \$100,000. This legislation will also increase reimbursement rates so childcare providers can keep classrooms open and deliver quality services to all families. House Bill 7319 will eliminate the July 31, 2028 sunset on the CCAP for Child Care Staff Pilot program. This bill will make the proven and impactful CCAP for Child Care Staff Pilot program permanent so childcare educators can continue work they love and enroll their own children in high-quality childcare.

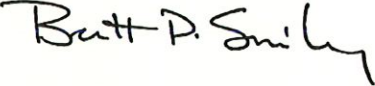
The increasing cost of childcare has become unaffordable for many Rhode Island families. A family earning the state median income spends \$12,500 on childcare each year. House Bills 7393 and 7319 will expand eligibility for state childcare subsidies so more families can enroll their children in early learning programs and so families can return to work. In Rhode Island, a childcare educator earns three dollars less each hour, and \$120 less over a 40-hour work week, than an early educator in neighboring Massachusetts. By eliminating childcare co-payments for most educators, these bills will help keep our early educators teaching in Rhode Island.

I am proud that in Providence we have achieved our goal of providing universal access to Pre-K programs through a mixed-delivery model that includes the Providence Public School District (PPSD), center-based providers, and family childcare homes. This legislation will support our

next steps in continuing to improve program quality and variety by improving staff retention and affordability.

I thank the sponsors of these critical pieces of legislation and respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of these bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett P. Smiley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Brett P. Smiley
Mayor