



May 14, 2026

**SEIU 1199NE Position in Support of H-7319, H-7320, H-7393, H-7462, H-7689, and H-7690
Relating to Childcare Access, RI Works, and Economic Stability for Working Families**

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

SEIU 1199NE represents approximately 7,500 healthcare workers, home care workers, childcare providers, and social service workers across Rhode Island, including approximately 400 family child care providers.

Our members see firsthand how difficult it has become for working families to remain financially stable while also trying to access affordable childcare. Many working parents are being pushed into impossible situations where they earn slightly too much to qualify for assistance, but nowhere near enough to comfortably afford childcare on their own.

At the same time, Rhode Island's childcare system itself remains under enormous strain.

A little over a decade ago, Rhode Island had more than 1,000 family child care providers. Today, that number has dropped dramatically. This decline has created major childcare access issues for working families across the state, particularly for families that rely on flexible, neighborhood-based childcare options.

SEIU 1199NE's family child care provider members have been working with the State of Rhode Island for nearly a year in an effort to improve conditions for providers and strengthen Rhode Island's childcare system. These providers perform critically important work caring for children and helping parents remain in the workforce, yet many continue to struggle with rising operating costs, low reimbursement rates, staffing challenges, and economic instability.

Many family child care providers are also facing skyrocketing healthcare costs. Because providers do not receive employer-sponsored health insurance, they are generally forced to purchase coverage through the health insurance exchange. Since enhanced ACA tax credits expired, several providers have reported seeing their monthly health insurance premiums increase from approximately \$400 per month to well over \$1,000 per month. These kinds of dramatic increases are simply unsustainable for many small childcare businesses.

Rhode Island cannot address its workforce and economic challenges without also addressing the childcare crisis.

H-7319, H-7393, and H-7462 would help improve access to childcare assistance and reduce financial barriers that prevent many working families from accessing affordable childcare. H-7689 would help reform RI Works policies that often trap families in economic instability instead of helping parents remain employed and pursue economic mobility. These reforms are also important for childcare providers themselves, many of whom are struggling with the same affordability pressures impacting working families across Rhode Island.

SEIU 1199NE also supports H-7320 and H-7690, which would make important changes related to child support policies and pass-through payments for families receiving public assistance. Families should not lose access to critical support systems or financial assistance because of policies that ultimately make it harder for parents to maintain stable households and care for their children.

Our members work in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, home care settings, childcare programs, and community organizations throughout Rhode Island. When working parents cannot access childcare, the impact is felt across the entire healthcare and human services system through staffing instability, burnout, absenteeism, and workforce turnover.

Investing in childcare and economic stability for working families is not only the right thing to do for Rhode Island families, but also a necessary workforce and economic policy decision for the future of our state.

We urge the committee to support these important bills.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alex Moore

Political Director

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