

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Rebecca Silver, PhD

Date: 3/30/26

Re: Support for H-7627

My name is Rebecca Silver. I am a resident of Providence and a licensed psychologist specializing in infant and early childhood mental health. Given my many roles within the Rhode Island infant and early childhood service delivery system (e.g., therapist, mental health consultant, professional development provider, researcher, program director), I know firsthand that continuity in specialized services is critical for young children's development. I therefore endorse the Right from the Start Campaign's **support of Early Intervention Bridget to Preschool Bill**.

This bill (H-7627) would allow children who have been determined eligible for preschool special education services and who have their 3rd birthday in May, June, July, or August to stay with their EI team until the start of the school year. This helps ensure young children with developmental delays and disabilities do not experience disruption and delay in services when they transition from "Part C" of IDEA to "Part B" of IDEA at age 3. Many school districts struggle to provide preschool special education services to children during the late Spring and Summer. When these delays and disruptions occur at age 3, children who have been making steady progress often experience developmental setbacks and lose skills that then need to be re-learned. In my professional roles, I have firsthand experience with this disruption and have observed many children whose development has been compromised and/or who have been suspended or expelled from their general education preschool setting because the transition from EI to special education has not gone smoothly. We need systemic solutions to address this problem; this is an opportunity for Rhode Island to adopt a recommended practice and take meaningful action.

Thank you for reviewing my testimony and my recommendation to **support the Early Intervention Bridget to Preschool Bill (H-7627)**.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Silver, PhD