



**State of Rhode Island**  
**Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos**

May 28, 2026

The Hon. Susan Donovan  
Chair, House Committee on Health and Human Services  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for House Bill 7627 – Early Intervention Extension

Dear Chair Donovan:

I write to express strong support for H 7627, "An Act Relating to Health and Safety—Maternal and Child Health Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs—Early Intervention Extension—Bridge to Preschool." This bill represents a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to addressing a significant gap in Rhode Island's early intervention services

Children with developmental delays and disabilities benefit tremendously from early intervention services. Research demonstrates that timely, high-quality early childhood intervention can improve educational outcomes, reduce long-term special education costs, and maximize children's long-term potential for success. Rhode Island has already witnessed this success: two out of three children with disabilities who entered preschool below age expectations substantially increased their acquisition of knowledge and skills to narrow or close the gap with same-age peers. We should build on this proven model.

Currently, a significant service gap exists for many children. Those with spring or summer birthdays face an abrupt cutoff of Part C early intervention services when they turn three years old, only to begin Part B preschool special education services in September. This gap can disrupt continuity of care at a critical developmental period. Children who are thriving in early intervention programs experience an unnecessary pause in services just as they prepare for the preschool transition.

H 7627 provides a practical solution that other states have successfully implemented. Six states and the District of Columbia have already created federally-approved frameworks to extend early intervention services beyond a child's third birthday, ensuring continuity and reducing service gaps. The federal government itself recognizes the value of this approach by reserving 15% of Part C appropriations in excess of \$460 million for states with early intervention extension options. In fiscal year 2023, this reserved funding totaled \$12 million. Rhode Island can tap into these federal resources while improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children.

This bill's implementation structure is thoughtfully designed. It requires the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education to develop a comprehensive plan with meaningful stakeholder input. The bill establishes an implementation advisory committee including

providers, local education agencies, early intervention advocates, and parents—those with direct expertise and lived experience. This collaborative approach increases the likelihood of successful, sustainable implementation

The bill also appropriately extends private insurance coverage to support the extension option, ensuring that families have consistent access to services regardless of their payer source. This removes a potential barrier to families choosing the continuity option that best serves their children.

H 7627 is straightforward, fiscally responsible, and centered on what matters most: supporting children's development and learning during a critical window. It will reduce inequities in service delivery, leverage federal funding already available to Rhode Island, and align our state with national best practices.

I urge the committee to vote favorably on this bill and advance it to the full House. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sabina Matos".

Sabina Matos  
Lieutenant Governor  
State of Rhode Island

CC: Representative Teresa Tanzi  
Speaker Christopher Blazewski  
Secretary Richard Charest  
Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green