



Rhode Island Department of Human Services
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Office of the Director
Kimberly Merolla-Brito

March 30, 2026
The Honorable Susan R. Donovan
Chair, House Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

Re: H7799 — An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government — Licensing and Monitoring of Child Daycare Providers

Dear Chair Donovan,

I am writing to you to express support for House Bill 7799, which proposes amending current child care licensing law so that child care center licenses are valid for two years rather than requiring an annual renewal.

As the agency responsible for licensing and monitoring of child care programs in Rhode Island, the Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this change as it would meaningfully reduce the administrative workload for child care providers. Passage of H7799 would also give providers more time towards offering direct child care services and help them prioritize improvements in other quality measures that enhance the quality of early learning in child care settings. Although the policy change is minor, it helps mitigate a regulatory burden, decreases time spent on administrative renewals, and improves operational stability for providers who continue to face challenges in workforce capacity and program sustainability. The bill thereby provides crucial and needed flexibility for providers who are on the frontlines of the child care sector.

The change in renewal frequency would also support DHS operations, helping improve efficiency and adherence to federal standards by providing licensing staff more time to focus on compliance monitoring.

Importantly, passage of H7799 does not carry any General Revenue cost, and updating the policy aligns with allowable federal laws and regulations since providers are required to maintain compliance with all regulatory standards throughout the cycle. DHS also retains authority to conduct inspections and enforce compliance as needed, maintaining program integrity while modernizing the licensing timeline as other neighboring states have done.

The bill as proposed supports Rhode Island families and providers with broader early childhood system improvements, while also ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. I urge the committee to consider passage of H7799, which would greatly benefit the child care sector.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Merolla-Brito

Kimberly Merolla-Brito
Director
RI Department of Human Services

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee Health and Human Services
The Honorable Mary Ann Shallcross Smith
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House of Representatives
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy