

**To:** Senate Education Committee

**From:** Laurie Farrell, Director, Seven Hills Rhode Island Early Intervention

**Date:** Date of hearing

**Re: Support S2785, Valverde: Fund Early Intervention Rates**

---

Thank you for your continued attention to and support of Rhode Island's Early Intervention system. As the director of one of the state's nine EI programs servicing infants and toddlers with developmental delays, I am grateful to be able to do this work in a state that values these youngest members of our community. However, I am faced daily with the challenges of recruiting and retaining the dedicated professionals needed to implement EI.

I am writing in support of S2785 and join the Right from the Start campaign to fully fund Early Intervention services in accordance with OHIC recommendations.

The financial challenges we face are often daunting; qualified professionals desire and deserve rates of pay that adequately compensate them for their experience and expertise. Our mission is to support infants and toddlers, many of whom face lifelong medical and developmental challenges, and their families. By providing necessary services and supports early, we set children on a path toward fulfilling their highest potential. And by empowering families, children experience consistent support throughout their daily routines and experiences.

Funding EI at 100% of the recommendations made by OHIC will ensure we can support our current staff and continue to attract young professionals entering the field at the beginning of what we hope will be a long career. Through this, we will be able to fully support the needs of all eligible infants and toddlers when they need them. Research consistently shows that providing meaningful supports early results in lasting positive outcomes. Strengthening RI Early Intervention's system will allow us to give our youngest and most vulnerable community members the services and supports they need to thrive.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and this legislation. I urge you to support S2785.

Sincerely,

Laurie Farrell