



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 28, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street,
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I support Senate Bill 2085, *An Act Relating to Human Services – The Rhode Island Works Program*. If enacted, this legislation would eliminate the August 2028 sunset date for the CCAP for Child Care Staff Pilot that provides childcare subsidies for childcare educators and would also expand eligibility to 85 percent of state median income to eliminate copayments for qualifying families.

In Rhode Island, the cost for an early educator to enroll their own child in childcare can be half their income, a burden that forces many educators to leave the field to care for their own families. In 2023, Rhode Island established the CCAP for Child Care Staff program, formerly known as Childcare for Childcare Educators, to build and retain the workforce following significant pandemic-era staffing losses. In 2025, the General Assembly approved a three-year extension of the program through 2028. House Bill 2085 will make this program permanent, offering early educators stability and eliminating childcare copayments so they can enroll their own children in high-quality programs. Retention of our early education workforce is critical as Rhode Island continues to work towards the statewide goal of 5,000 Pre-Kindergarten seats by 2028.

As Mayor, I am proud that Providence has achieved universal Pre-K access through a mixed-delivery model that includes the Providence Public School District, center-based providers, and family childcare homes. We are now committed to maintaining each seat so families may choose the program that best meets their needs and staff retention is critical to keeping all of our city's early education classrooms open. Providers have made it clear that the CCAP for Child Care Staff Pilot program has helped them retain their staff and keep their classrooms open, especially infant and toddler classrooms.

Rhode Island is a national leader in rebuilding and retaining our early educator workforce through programs like CCAP for Childcare Educators. Making this critical and highly successful program permanent and eliminating copayments for early educators will sustain the workforce and ensure that our early education classrooms remain open.

I thank sponsor of this legislation and respectfully ask the committee to vote in favor of Senate Bill 2085.

Sincerely,

Brett P. Smiley
Mayor