



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

As a family child care provider, the WAGE\$ program has helped me continue working in early childhood education while supporting my own family. Caring for young children is very important work, but it is also challenging financially.

Without the WAGE\$ supplement, it would be harder for me to pay for everyday expenses such as food, bills, educational materials, and supplies for the children in my care. These additional funds help reduce stress and allow me to focus on providing a safe, loving, and educational environment for children.

WAGE\$ also makes me feel valued and recognized for the work I do every day as an early childhood educator. Supporting programs like this helps keep dedicated educators in the field and benefits children, families, and the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Soleny Ulloa Tirado



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



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Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2369, the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act. I have worked in childcare and early education for 20 years, and during that time I have seen firsthand the dedication, patience, and hard work required to support young children and their families.

Programs like WAGE\$ recognize the value of early educators and help provide financial support that encourages experienced teachers to remain in the field. Retaining qualified educators benefits children, families, and our communities.

I respectfully ask for your support of SB2369 and the continued funding of WAGE\$

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amalia Pineda



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
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Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **S 2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

My name is Julie Bentely, and I am a Toddler Teacher at Tender Hearts Child Care and Learning Center. This wage helps us, because we don't get paid nearly enough for what we deal with and our role as teachers. Most of us do this work for the children and deal with the pay. Because they are what is most important. Watching them grow and being able to financially help them grow as well.

Daycare/preschool is more than babysitting and playing all day; we have these children for 9 hours a day, teach and mold their little minds, and deal with many challenges. We make sure they hit all their milestones and assess throughout the day. You need patience, and many teachers don't have that. But this is a good incentive to keep teachers in the workforce.

Sincerely,

Julie Bentley



Rhode Island Association for the
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My name is Alishia Bickham, and I am a Lead Preschool Teacher at Sunshine Child Development Center. This supplement has helped me in many ways, both financially and personally. As inflation rises, my pay has not increased enough to afford basic necessities like gas or food. I have a bachelor's degree in early childhood, and I work very hard at meeting the individual needs of the children in my classroom. I can also buy small items for my classroom as needed. Overall, those of us who work in this profession do not get paid as much as we should. We work just as hard as public-school teachers, hold similar degrees, follow RIDE/RIELDS standards, complete assessments, conduct parent-teacher conferences, etc.

We deserve more pay, and I do hope these funds will remain available for years to come. This supplemental wage program helps me financially, as I've gone years without a rate of pay increase. I love working in Preschool; however, due to inflation and rising costs, I may have to find other ways to make ends meet.

I would like you to know that those of us in this profession love early childhood, families, and watching young children grow. We challenge, motivate, and nurture young children. We shape their minds positively and prepare them for elementary school using a set of guidelines from RIDE. We work very hard and are not recognized as professionals, both financially and respectfully.

Sincerely,

Alishia Bickham



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My name is Kristina Bowers, and I am a Pre-K Teaching Assistant at Connecting for Children and Families. I was able to pay down financial debts due to low-income wages and improve my family's living conditions.

I was also financially secure, which influenced my decision to seek additional or alternative employment, allowing me to remain with my current employer, where I have worked for 8 years.

I think this program incentivizes educators to continue their education while also relieving the financial burden educators may be experiencing. This program recognizes the importance of educators receiving a living wage. This financial supplement program recognizes teachers who make an effort to obtain and continue their education but are not receiving an income that reflects their dedication to applying best practices in educating our future generations.

Sincerely,

Kristina Bowers



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My name is Lauren Buell, and I am a Preschool Assistant at Progressive Learning for Children. The supplement has helped ease the financial burden, which has been a major source of stress in my marriage, and has helped me feel less stressed, so I perform better in all aspects of life. My husband wants me to leave this field to make more money. The supplement, if ongoing, would allow me to remain in this field, which I have been in for over 20 years as a lead and an assistant.

In this field, we get paid very little. Most centers require a lead to have an Associate's Degree or higher, but this job pays a fraction of what other fields offer when an employee has a degree. We do it because we love it, and I believe it is critical to a child's future success. Nowadays, families need childcare and want quality education, but we do not make a livable wage in a field that is somewhat essential for professionals with young children.

Sincerely,

Lauren Buell



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My name is Jillian Cinquantini and I am a Lead Toddler Teacher at Connecting for Children and Families. I went to community college and was fortunate to send my oldest child to attend a 4-year college. I used my original 5k per 6 months check to pay off his tuition, as I was not approved for loans and couldn't financially handle it. Unfortunately, for this semester, he had to take a leave of absence because we could not afford it any longer. However, we were able to use the newer, smaller grant to continue part-time classes from home.

I was able to sustain this continuous cycle of education in my life and remain productive at home. This allowed me to focus and reallocate any additional funds to my family and other needs. I have not received a raise at work in over 3 years. It's been tough, but this program lets me bypass that and keep up the good work. This program and programs alike are crucial to keeping up with equitable wages for all.

Sincerely,

Jillian Cinquantini



Rhode Island Association for the
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My name is Essence Clark, and I am a Pre-K Teacher's Assistant at Smith Hill Early Learning Center. The wage supplement has helped me financially by providing more income stability and reducing stress. It has made it easier to cover basic expenses and has made me feel more secure in my career.

For the children, it means they have a more focused and consistent teacher, which supports their development. For the early childhood community, it helps with staff retention and shows that our work is valuable.

Maintaining the program contributes to lower staff turnover, enhances educator retention, and ensures more consistent care for children. When teachers feel financially appreciated and secure, they are more inclined to remain in their positions, seek professional growth, and provide quality education. Maintaining the WAGE\$ Supplement program strengthens educators, benefits children through stable relationships, and supports the long-term health of the early childhood community.

Sincerely,

Essence Clark



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My name is Laura Cline, and I am a Lead Teacher at Cadence Academy Preschool in Smithfield, RI. Our field is not a money maker. We are vital for early childhood education and vital to parents who have to work. We show up every day for them, and the children in our care, and our pay does not reflect our importance. It's nice to get this extra bonus.

If the entirety of the early childhood field went on strike tomorrow, it would set off chain reactions. Parents need us to be able to be at their jobs every day. Oftentimes, we see their children for more waking hours than they do. We reassure their safety. We teach them social-emotional skills and basic self-help skills. We teach them early literacy, appreciation for music, and art. We snuggle them when they are sick, sad, or just in need of extra love. We bridge the gap between school and home. In some situations, we are the only constant these children have.

The birth through 3 years old timeline is the most important years of a child's life. It is the scaffolding for their future, and we are helping with that construction. We matter. It needs to be reflected in our pay. This program is an excellent start.

Sincerely,

Laura Cline



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My name is Alexis Monteiro, and I am a Lead Infant Teacher at the Children's Workshop. The wage supplement helped me out when I was in a financial bind after my sister's passing. Childcare teachers are not recognized enough and don't receive the proper pay for the work we do. It helps the teachers financially, especially in this economy.

Sincerely,

Alexis Monteiro



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My name is Laurie McElwain, and I am a teacher at Blessed Sacrament School. In a profession that is grossly underpaid, it is crucial to keep good teachers in the classroom. I've been a PreK teacher for almost 30 years. With the cost of living rising while my salary barely changes, I might have to leave the profession I love to make ends meet. Getting the supplemental pay has allowed me to continue teaching.

Sincerely,

Laurie McElwain



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My name is Savannah Murchison, and I am a Lead Toddler Teacher at Sunshine Child Development Center. The wage supplement has helped me mentally, which in turn has helped me work with my children. Not having to worry about money makes it much easier to focus on the children in my care. It has come through and helped me so much in my time of need; I don't know where I would be right now without it. This supplement helps me tremendously and enables me to care for my favorite little humans.

Education is so important right now, and having teachers is so important for the future, especially with everything going on. This wage supplement ensures teachers can do their jobs as stress-free as possible.

Sincerely,

Savannah Murchison



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My name is Hailey Otero, and I am a Toddler Teacher at Little Learners Academy of Smithfield. Besides contributing to my classroom, this funding has helped me to stay afloat in my personal life. Not only has the program funding been beneficial for my personal life, but it has given me the financial means to purchase materials and other supplies for my classroom!

This wage supplement makes teachers feel appreciated for all the work that they do.

Sincerely,

Hailey Otero



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My name is R. Peckham and I am a Lead Pre-K Teacher and Toddler Coordinator at Twice as Nice Early Learning Center. The wage supplement has benefited me significantly and made a meaningful difference both personally and professionally. It has helped provide financial stability in a field where compensation often does not reflect the level of skill, education, and responsibility required. On a personal level, it has relieved some financial stress and allowed me to focus more fully on my work instead of constantly worrying about finances. As someone who is currently pregnant, the supplement also allowed me to purchase a reliable car, which has been incredibly important for my safety, my growing family, and my ability to consistently get to and from work.

In the classroom, the impact is just as important. When educators feel more supported financially, it directly affects the quality of care and education we provide. We are more present, more patient, and more intentional in our teaching. It also supports consistency for children, as financial incentives like this can help reduce staff turnover, which is critical for building strong, secure relationships in early childhood settings.

For the early childhood community as a whole, the supplement sends a powerful message that this work matters. It acknowledges that early educators are professionals who deserve fair compensation. That said, while the supplement is incredibly helpful, it is not a complete solution. It feels temporary and does not address the larger, ongoing issue of low base wages in the field.

So yes, the supplement has helped in very real and meaningful ways, and it is imperative that it continues. At the same time, there must be a long-term, sustainable solution to the pay crisis in early childhood education—one that ensures educators are paid fairly without relying on temporary supplements.

I strongly believe the WAGE\$ Supplement program should continue, and that it is more

important now than ever.

This program has made a real and meaningful difference in my life and in my work as an early childhood educator. It has provided financial support in a field where compensation often does not reflect the level of experience, education, and responsibility required. Because of this supplement, I've been able to feel more stable financially and stay focused on providing high-quality care and education. It has even allowed me to make important life decisions, like purchasing a reliable car while preparing for a growing family.

More importantly, the impact goes far beyond individual educators. When teachers are supported, children benefit directly. Consistent, experienced educators create stronger relationships, more stable classrooms, and more intentional teaching. Without that support, the field continues to struggle with burnout and turnover, and our children ultimately feel the effects. Right now, the reality is that early childhood education is underfunded and undervalued, and our children are being done a disservice because the workforce supporting them is not being adequately supported.

WAGE\$ is a critical step in the right direction. It helps retain experienced educators, encourages professional growth, and acknowledges the importance of this work. At the same time, it cannot be the only solution. The entire field needs sustained investment, including higher base wages and long-term systemic support, so that educators are not relying on supplemental programs to make ends meet.

Overall, WAGE\$ should absolutely continue. It is an essential support for educators and a necessary investment in children. With continued funding and thoughtful improvements, it can be part of a larger, much-needed effort to strengthen the early childhood workforce and ensure that children receive the quality care and education they deserve.

I want funders to understand that this wage supplement is not just helpful—it is essential.

Early childhood educators are doing critically important work during the most important years of a child's development, yet the field continues to be underpaid and undervalued. The WAGE\$ supplement helps bridge that gap in a very real way. It allows educators like me to stay in the field, continue our education, and remain focused on providing high-quality care without constantly worrying about financial instability.

In my own experience, this supplement has had a direct impact on my life. It has provided a level of financial stability that made it possible for me to make responsible, necessary decisions, like purchasing a reliable car while preparing for a growing family. That kind of stability matters—not just for me, but for the children and families I serve every day.

When educators are supported, children benefit. Stable, experienced teachers create consistent, nurturing environments where children can build relationships, feel safe, and truly learn. Without support like this, the field faces high turnover, burnout, and a loss of experienced educators, which ultimately impacts the quality of care children receive. Right now, our children are being done a disservice because the workforce supporting them is stretched too thin and not adequately compensated.

This supplement is a powerful investment in both educators and children. It helps retain

qualified professionals, supports ongoing education and certification, and strengthens the overall quality of early childhood programs. However, it is also clear that this cannot be the only solution. Continued and increased funding is necessary, along with broader efforts to raise base wages across the field.

I would urge funders to see this program as a critical piece of a larger solution. Supporting early childhood educators is supporting children, families, and communities. The return on that investment is long-term and far-reaching, and programs like WAGE\$ are a vital step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

R. Peckham



Rhode Island Association for the
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My name is Glorayma Ramos and I am a Teacher at Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center. In my own life, this supplement has helped me contribute toward paying off debts and somewhat stabilize my lifestyle.

As for my children, it has enabled me to provide them with educational materials, thereby also helping the community.

We have low wages across all our work, and prices keep going up.

Sincerely,

Glorayma Ramos



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My name is Emily Rezendes, and I am a Lead Teacher at the Children's Workshop. This supplement has been life-changing for me! Early childhood educators do not make enough money and have a very hard Job. We work long days and don't get summers off. It is nice to know that we have some type of cash bonus coming our way. The educators in this field are very tired from being overworked and overpaid, so we are very appreciative of this bonus incentive.

Sincerely,

Emily Rezendes



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My name is Brenda Rodriguez, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Friend. This wage supplement has been an appreciated financial help over the past few years. I've used part of the money to add to my savings for my 3 children and me, and also to pay bills. From my coworkers' testimonies, I can attest that it has been financially helpful for every single one of them. We have been very eager to be recognized.

It is very important that you continue to improve our lives financially. Even if it is only twice a year, it is a tremendous help to our families in need. Please continue to provide these funds as an incentive and recognition of our very important work with children.

Sincerely,

Brenda Rodriguez



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My name is Lauren St. Jean, and I am a Teacher at My Learning Tree. Because of this supplement, I was able to pay a bill I had been struggling with, so I am now caught up on that. It's very helpful, and for some people, it's a life-changer. I cannot afford to further my education, so continuing this program would help me do that.

The money may seem minuscule, but to some people, it's changing their lives and shows some appreciation for the very hard work we all do.

Sincerely,

Lauren St. Jean



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My name is Claudia Rojas, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at WHSCDA. The wage supplement has facilitated me and supplied my classroom with quality educational materials. Not every program has the budget to offer a pay increase. This program offers financial support.

In my case, the funds are reinvested into Education; there is a tangible return on your investment.

Sincerely,

Claudia Rojas



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My name is Jessica Vargas, and I work as a preschool teacher at Beautiful Beginnings Child Care Center. Because of the wage supplement, I have been better able to pay my bills (electric, water, phone, etc). I have been better able to address my family's basic needs (food/housing). I have been better able to address my family's transportation needs (gas, auto insurance, car payments, car repairs, etc.). I have been better able to address the health needs of my family (medical bills, insurance, medications). I have used my supplement to help pay for child care costs. I have used my supplement to provide additional resources for my classroom or child care program.

This benefit helps a little. But also, a little goes a long way. It makes me feel recognized and acknowledged. My work in my classroom is important to the families I serve. I always show my class the same appreciation. It'll be great if the funding continues. We are essential to the children we serve.

Sincerely,

Jessica Vargas



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My name is Malissa Winfield, and I am a Teacher's Assistant at Children's Workshop Foundation. This wage supplement has helped my pay off bill and medical expenses.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to make this possible and available for a group of men and women who work hard and love their jobs.

Sincerely,

Malissa Winfield



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



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There are seven educators working at our program who have at one point received funding through the WAGES act. This has been extremely beneficial to the qualifying educators. They have reported being able to pay down bills that accrue due to lower wages, return to school, engage in self care practices, and supplement their income.

Early Childhood Education has been an underappreciated, under supported field for many years. Being able to share that they have been approved for the WAGES supplement helps me as a program director, because we are so limited in our ability to provide a livable wage. The funding for this has kept our employees here for extended time periods, and provides much needed consistency for the students in our program.

Without these supplements, I fear that educators will leave the field. The work we do each day is crucial to supporting not only school readiness, but also, we are teaching children to be members of society.

I urge you to please support the continuation of SB2369: An Act Relating to Education Rhode Island Early Educators Workforce Act so we can continue to support the hard working educators doing this very challenging yet rewarding work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Campbell



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



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As an employer, I have seen firsthand how WAGE\$ strengthens our program. Several members of our staff have benefited from receiving WAGE\$ supplements, and the impact is clear: improved retention, greater stability in classrooms, and a more qualified, committed workforce.

These supplements help us keep experienced educators in the field at a time when recruitment and retention are among the greatest challenges facing early childhood programs. When educators can afford to stay, children benefit from consistent relationships, stronger learning environments, and higher-quality care.

Renewing funding for WAGE\$ is imperative. Losing this support would jeopardize the stability of our workforce and undermine the progress Rhode Island has made in strengthening early education. Continued investment in WAGE\$ is an investment in children, families, and the long-term health of our early learning system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Phyllis H. Evans
Executive Director
Roger Williams Day Care Center
64 Applegate Lane
Providence RI 02905



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I am writing to express my support for SB2369, the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act. This bill is essential in ensuring that early childhood educators receive fair compensation for the important work they do.

As someone who works and is connected in the field, I see firsthand how dedicated educators support children's growth and development every day. Providing stable funding for wage supplements will help keep qualified educators and strengthen the quality of care for young children across our state.

Le escribo para expresar mi apoyo a SB2369, la Ley de Fuerza Laboral de Educadores Tempranos de Rhode Island. Este proyecto de ley es esencial para garantizar que los educadores de la primera infancia reciban una compensación justa por el importante trabajo que hacen.

Como alguien que trabaja y está conectado en el campo, veo de primera mano cómo los educadores dedicados apoyan el crecimiento y el desarrollo de los niños todos los días. Proporcionar financiación estable para suplementos salariales ayudará a mantener educadores calificados y fortalecerá la calidad de la atención a los niños pequeños en todo nuestro estado.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amalia Pineda



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



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Eso me ayudado mucho para poder pagar algunos pagos de mi casa, también para comprar comida para mis hijos y mucho más, espero que sigan ayudando a muchas personas que lo necesitan, gracias por la ayuda.....

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Gaudy Recinos

Jamie Plume

From: Miguelina Peguero <miguelinaapeguero@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 4:16 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: Senate testimony WAGES

You don't often get email from miguelinaapeguero@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this message to express if I was eligible for funds.

I would use the money to help refurbish my daycare with new equipment to better help the children enrolled in my daycare that I deeply care for.

The children would benefit from up to date and educational toys and items to help prepare them for when they start school.

Thank you.

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Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I am an early childhood educator, Im also in my twenty second year of teaching. Most of us who are in this field don't do it cause of the pay its cause we have heart. WAGES has helped me personally in numerous ways. I was down on hard times and when I was eligible I counted it as a blessing. A blessing that many of us count on. It has helped me go grocery shopping , pay my health insurance. This has also helped me provide a Christmas for my family. It ensured that a utility bill will be paid, rent/ mortgage will be paid. It has made me keep going in my education, going back to school was huge to do.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Jessica V.
Childcare Educator.



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I am a preschool administrator in Providence, and have taught in early childhood settings in Rhode Island since 2002. Despite having a Masters degree in early childhood education, I have at times been paid just above minimum wage, with little or no paid time off and no health insurance. The only reason I could remain in this field was because I have a spouse with a larger income. I was lucky to receive a WAGE\$ grant, which was a great help to my family.

Over the years, I have seen many talented and dedicated teachers leave for other careers because they could not afford to stay. Now that I am in an administrative role, I have seen how difficult it has become to recruit and retain high-quality early childhood educators. The work is incredibly challenging and requires training and expertise. WAGE\$ grants encourage teachers to increase their education so that we can build a more effective workforce here in Rhode Island. For those who already have a degree in the field, WAGE\$ grants make up the gap between what they earn and what they could be earning in a different career.

Continuing funding for WAGE\$ is an investment we must make now in order to sustain the early childhood field. Reducing the stress of financial insecurity for teachers allows them to focus on the children in their care. This bill is important not just for Rhode Island's teachers, but for our children as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy M Ryan



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Evelyn Leonardo, and I am an assistant teacher in early childhood education in Rhode Island with ten years of experience in the field. In addition to my professional role, I am a mother of two daughters, which further strengthens my commitment to the well-being and education of young children.

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2369, the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act.

I am deeply proud to be part of this field and of the program where I currently work, Progreso Latino, a nonprofit organization that not only supports children's development but also provides services and support to families. Our work requires a high level of commitment and dedication, and we often work additional hours to ensure that we can provide comprehensive and high-quality support to the community we serve.

This program has significantly contributed to my professional growth. Through consistent participation in training and professional development opportunities, I successfully graduated this year from the Community College of Rhode Island, completing 24 college credits. I plan to continue my studies to obtain an associate degree, as I am committed to continuing my professional growth and providing the highest quality care and education to the children in my care.

This process has strengthened my skills as an educator and has allowed me to provide a higher-quality learning environment. Additionally, it has increased my confidence in my professional practice. Thanks to the collective commitment and dedication of our team, our program has earned a five-star rating, reflecting the high level of performance and hard work behind our educational efforts.

I applied for the WAGE\$ supplement program, but I was placed on a waiting list due to limited funding. Access to this additional income would make a significant difference in my life. These funds would help me cover essential expenses and supplement my income so that I would not need to seek a second job in the evenings. Given the current economic challenges, this support would allow me to focus on continuing my education and professional development rather than balancing multiple jobs.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely

Evelyn Leonardo

Jamie Plume

From: Joselin Tavaréz <uldatavarez0461@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 9:34 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: Support for SB2369-WAGE\$ Program Joselin Tavaréz,

You don't often get email from uldatavarez0461@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Attention: Jamie Plume Secretary of Committee

I'm writing to express my strong support for SB2369: An Act Relating to Education-Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act, which would continue funding for WAGE\$ Program.

As an early educator, I have personally benefited from the Wage\$ Salary Supplement. This additional income has helped me purchase essential household items for my home, make necessary repairs to my vehicle, and pay off outstanding debts. With the salary I earn, it is often difficult to cover all of my living expenses and financial responsibilities.

The WAGE\$ Supplement has provided much-needed financial stability for me and my family. Without this support I would face significant financial hardship. Losing WAGE\$ would negatively impact my household budget and make it much more challenging to meet important expenses that my regular salary alone cannot cover.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued support of Rhode Island's Early Childhood Workforce.

Sincerely,

Joselin Tavaréz
Early Childhood Educator
in support of SB2369



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I am the Director of a small, not for profit Preschool Program that has maintained a Brightstars Rating of 5, for several years. Our Program has been licensed in Rhode Island for the past 45 years, and the quality and longevity of the program is a direct result of the dedicated staff that we employ.

As you know, in order to offer quality programming to our families, at an affordable cost, it is difficult to keep a dedicated workforce who must also provide for their own families. In order to keep qualified staff, tuition rates continually go up, which causes financial hardship to the families we serve. It becomes a vicious cycle. As a matter of fact our preschool was founded by three young mothers who saw the need for an affordable preschool experience for their children.

Currently we have two staff members who qualify for, and receive funding through WAGE\$. They, and we are extremely grateful. Because of this program, they are able to continue working with us, and we are able to offer families consistency of staff. In addition, they are able to take continuing education classes to further their knowledge of child development. Both of these women were parents in our program before becoming employed. They understand and have lived the hardship of being able to afford quality programming for their children.

These teachers are extremely talented and dedicated to the families in our program, but they also need to contribute to their own personal family's economy. The additional funding that they receive through WAGE\$ allows them to stay in a job and program that they love, while providing for their own children.

Our Program is extremely grateful for the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act, and hope the funding for WAGE\$ will continue indefinitely, and perhaps expand at some level. Teacher salaries in the private, non-profit sector simply cannot compete with the public school wages and benefits. Small programs must constantly look for and find ways, through donation, grants, and fund raising, to simply stay afloat. The WAGE\$ program has helped us immensely.

With MUCH Gratitude!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret Kelley, Director
Charlestown Early Learning Center

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

Este suplemento me ha ayudado en muchísimo ya que el costo de la vida está muy elevado y siempre estamos necesitando materiales para poder trabajar con los niños y además poder pagarle a nuestro asistente. Este suplemento en muchas ocasiones me ha servido para ayudarme con la factura eléctrica, estoy muy segura que con la falta de este suplemento se continuará agudizando la mala situación económica que tenemos los educadores de Rhode Island. Pedimos que continúen dando este suplemento como un aliciente para amortiguar esta situación económica tan difícil para todos.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely, Josefina Javier



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I currently have one full-time teacher enrolled in WAGE\$, and a second full-time teacher who will be applying this month now that she has become eligible after working full-time hours while also taking Early Childhood Education classes. Both teachers have worked with me for four years and are deeply committed to the future of young children.

Having WAGE\$ available as a benefit has helped me retain dedicated teachers and keep them motivated to continue their professional development and education. With the continued rise in inflation and cost of living, many talented educators may consider leaving the field for higher-paying careers. These salary supplements help early childhood teachers receive the compensation they deserve for the important work they do every day.

Programs like WAGE\$ also help childcare owners avoid raising tuition costs for families. This creates a positive outcome for everyone involved: teachers feel valued and supported, childcare programs can retain experienced staff, and families benefit from stable tuition rates and consistent, high-quality care for their children without frequent teacher turnover.

Please continue supporting Rhode Island's early childhood workforce by supporting SB2369 and continued funding for WAGE\$.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wesly



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I have been working for the WAGE\$ program for over a year now. I've been able to witness how this program has positively impacted early childhood educators. My hope is that early childhood educators, including those on our wait list, would continue to receive these supplements.

Hearing back from WAGE\$ recipients demonstrates how selfless they are. Many of them use their supplements to pour back into the children. This program is fundamental to retain early childhood educators in the field. They earn way below their means and are forced to leave work that they love. It is crucial to fund programs like WAGE\$ because it contributes to the futures of our children.

I support SB2369: An Act Relating To Education - Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act so that center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting receive education-based salary supplements.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Yalitsa Disla



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I have been an early childhood educator for over 20 years as both a lead and an assistant, throughout this time my pay has been between 9.25\$ per hour to 17.25\$ per hour. I also have a bachelor degree in education and have taken some classes towards a masters degree. This is the only field I am aware of where the pay does not reflect education or experience. My pay rate from 20 years ago until now is not a livable wage. I cannot pay off student loans, loans I took out to become a better educator. I received the step up to wages supplement one time, this was only because they changed the credentials, at first because my degree was not in early childhood I did not qualify, my degree is in childhood education which is many of the same classes, my 20 years experience did not count for anything, which was very discouraging. In Dec 25 I qualified, it was right before Christmas and it was the first time in a very long time I was able to give my son a great Christmas without worrying about how I was going to pay bills and put food on the table. Many of my friends and family ask why I do not apply to an elementary school for the better pay, benefits etc. The answer is because I love early childhood and I believe I am a quality educator. Over the years I have seen various different programs saying Rhode Island needs quality early childhood educators. The state wants degrees and credentials. This is great, but this job is very demanding and the pay is abysmal. If I wasn't married I would not be able to continue to work in this field because even lead teachers do not make a livable wage. I understand in order to pay a livable wage tuition would go up exponentially and most families would not be able to afford care. It makes me crazy when I hear how important quality teachers are in early childhood, they want us to continue our education and compete professional development (on our own) then we need pay that reflects the quality of our work, credentials and experience. I think it would be beneficial to the field as a whole that supplement programs continue, and even loosen some of the restrictions where experience and dedication to the field is worth the same as a degree. I should be able to work 40 hours a week with a bachelors degree and 20+ years experience and be able to pay rent, insurance, utilities and put food on the table.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lauren Buell

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I am writing in support of the wage program because I have seen firsthand how important this program is for early childhood educators like me. I have worked at the same daycare center for over 20 years, caring for and teaching young children during some of the most important years of their lives. The salary supplements recognize the important work that early educators do and help make it possible for educators like me to continue our careers in early childhood education. While I love what I do, early educators often work hard for low wages. The WAGE program has made a real difference for me. It encouraged me to continue my education and helped provide additional income that supports my family. It also made me feel valued and recognized for the important work I do every day. Children deserve experienced, dedicated teachers, and also educators deserve support that helps them stay in the field. Programs like WAGE help ensures that experience teachers are being kept in the field while improving the quality of care/education for the families in Rhode Island. After more than 20 years in early childhood education, I can confidently say that this investment matters. Investing in the early educator workforce benefits children, families, and communities. I respectfully ask you to support and continue funding the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ulianne Montervil



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I am writing in support of the continued funding of the Wages Program. These monies helped me contribute to my household, purchase developmentally appropriate materials for my classroom (ex. books, toys, puzzles, art materials, visuals, outdoor play materials), as well as clothing and bedding for the children in our program. These funds also aided me in continuing my education in obtaining my Child Development Associate certification. Early Childhood Educators/Teachers typically work the last two weeks in August to the third week in June. The balance of the year is unpaid. The Wages program helps to bridge the gap. Please note, the funds are not spent frivolously; in essence, they are reinvested into the program and community, inherently supporting the economy. The Wages program provides for a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship- a “win-win”. Educator retention has become extremely challenging as compensation is not on par with inflation nor commensurate with the labor and expertise required. Early childhood education is vital to a successful and productive world. Consistency is core to that end. Please continue the Wages Program in support of the early childhood educators who are willing, working, present, and engaged with the children who make up tomorrow’s future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Claudia Rojas-DeVorak



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
Start

Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **HB7317: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB7317: An Act Relating to Education — Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act, which continues funding for the WAGE\$ program.

As a family child care provider, I work every day to support young children and working families in my community. I am currently on the waiting list to receive WAGE\$ funding, which shows how urgently early educators need this support.

My assistant receives WAGE\$ supplements, and these bonuses are essential. They allow me to compete with salaries in other fields and help prevent educators from leaving early childhood education for higher-paying jobs. Without programs like WAGE\$, retaining qualified staff becomes extremely difficult.

Supporting WAGE\$ means supporting children, families, and the stability of the early childhood workforce. I respectfully urge you to support HB7317 and continue investing in early educators.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Arlene Leger



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

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Supporting WAGE\$ means supporting children, families, and the stability of the early childhood workforce. I respectfully urge you to support HB7317 and continue investing in early educators.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Arlene Leger



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

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Sincerely,

Arlene Leger



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Arlene Leger



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



Right from the
Start

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

Dear Chairman and Committee,

I have worked at a daycare in East Greenwich for two years. During this time, I have witnessed the dedication and love offered to children, ages 3 mos. to 5 years offered by their teachers/caregivers on a daily basis. I am impressed and moved that this group of professionals are able to persevere day in and day out, considering the unfair compensation society has allotted for such important work.

Not only do these women offer love, guidance, structure and a safe environment to learn, they also offer parents the opportunity to earn a good living that can sustain their financial needs. For this reason, I think it is imperative that preschool teachers are given an economic boost. Not only would the funds help present workers stay afloat with taking care of their daily needs, but also may attract new workers to a field that is struggling to recruit more staff for such an important job.

I see many younger teachers coming and going at a high turnover because the compensation is not enough to keep them. It's hard work and there are many other options for the same pay.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie Mahoney
401-203-6894

Chairman DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to voice my support for **SB2369: An Act Relating To Education -- Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for WAGE\$, which provides education-based salary supplements to center-based educators and family childcare providers working with children in an early childhood setting.

My name is Venkata Durga Banavath and I am an early childhood educator in Rhode Island. I am writing in strong support of **SB2369: An Act Relating to Education – Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act**, which would continue funding for the WAGE\$ program.

As an early childhood teacher, I understand the critical role educators play in supporting young children's learning, development, and well-being during their most important years of growth. High-quality early childhood education depends on dedicated, qualified professionals who build strong relationships with children and families every day.

The WAGE\$ program recognizes the value of early childhood educators by providing education-based salary supplements. This support encourages educators to continue their professional development, remain in the field, and provide consistent, high-quality care and education for young children. In a profession that often faces challenges with low wages and high turnover, programs like WAGE\$ help strengthen and stabilize the workforce.

Investing in early childhood educators is an investment in Rhode Island's children, families, and future. By continuing funding for WAGE\$, the state demonstrates its commitment to retaining skilled educators and improving the quality of early learning programs across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation. I respectfully urge you to support SB2369 and continue funding for the WAGE\$ program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Venkata Banavath

Jamie Plume

From: Iliane Montervil <ilianemstyves@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 7:33 AM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: my testimony

You don't often get email from ilianemstyves@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am writing in support of the wage program because I have seen firsthand how important this program is for early childhood educators like me. I have worked at the same daycare center for over 20 years, caring for and teaching young children during some of the most important years of their lives. The salary supplements recognize the important work that early educators do and help make it possible for educators like me to continue our careers in early childhood education.

While I love what I do, early educators often work hard for low wages. The WAGE program has made a real difference for me. It encouraged me to continue my education and helped provide additional income that supports my family. It also made me feel valued and recognized for the important work I do every day. Children deserve experienced, dedicated teachers, and also educators deserve support that helps them stay in the field. Programs like WAGE help ensure that experienced teachers are being kept in the field while improving the quality of care/education for the families in Rhode Island.

After more than 20 years in early childhood education, I can confidently say that this investment matters. Investing in the early educator workforce benefits children, families, and communities. I respectfully ask you to support and continue funding the Rhode Island Early Educator Workforce Act.

Sincerely,

Ulianne Montervil

Jamie Plume

From: Ana Ramirez <aramirez2165@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 2:27 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: Testimonial

You don't often get email from aramirez2165@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hola, soy Ana Ramírez soy Proveedora de cuidado infantil por 17 años en Providence RI. Durante todo ese tiempo hemos tenido por muchas satisfactions con Los niños viendo sus crecimientos y aprendizages. Pero tambien hemos tenido muchisimos desafios que enfrenrar por la falta de recursos: por exemplo: falta de materiales educativos, falta de dinero para pagar una ayudante, falta de dinero para implementation areas de juegos seguras para los niños..etc.

Cuando recivi la ayuda de Wages de inmediato contacte un contratista especialista en poner Fensas. Ya tengo mi patio cerrado. Antes ere un espacio abierto sin ninguna seguridad da para los niños. Los \$5000.00 Que recibi de Wages no fueron suficientes para pagar el trabajo pero fueron de gran ayuda y motivation para hacer el trabajo que necesitaba para tener un patio mas seguro en mi programa.

Gracias!!