



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

May 5, 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 am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2667, *An Act Relating to Human Services – The Rhode Island Childcare Is Essential Act*. If passed, this legislation will expand eligibility for the Rhode Island Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP), the state's childcare subsidy program, and also raise reimbursement rates for childcare providers serving families participating in the program.

The increasing cost of childcare has become unaffordable for many Rhode Island families; a family earning the state median income spends \$12,500 on childcare each year. Senate Bill 2667 will make childcare more affordable by expanding CCAP eligibility to families with an annual income up to \$100,000. In Rhode Island, a childcare educator earns three dollars less each hour – and \$120 less over a 40-hour work week – than a childcare educator in neighboring Massachusetts. This bill will expand CCAP eligibility so childcare educators can continue the work they love and enroll their own children in high-quality childcare, helping providers retain their staff. This legislation will also increase reimbursement rates so childcare providers can keep classrooms open and deliver quality services to all families.

In the City of Providence, we have achieved universal Pre-K access through a mixed-delivery model that includes the Providence Public School District (PPSD), center-based providers, and family childcare homes. We are now committed to maintaining each seat and affordability and staff retention are critical to keeping all of our city's early education classrooms open. This legislation is in direct support for the work that my Administration has been doing.

I thank the sponsor of this legislation respectfully ask the Committee to vote in favor of Senate Bill 2667.

Sincerely,


Brett P. Smiley
Mayor