

Jamie Plume

From: Tara Boulais <tarab0778@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 3:07 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: Written testimony s2834

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Written Testimony in Support of S-2834
Submitted by Tara Boulais
May 5, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

My name is Tara Boulais, and I am a parent and resident of Rhode Island. I am writing today to strongly support S-2834, the EI Extension: Bridge to Preschool bill. This legislation is essential for preventing harmful service gaps for young children with developmental delays as they transition from Early Intervention (EI) to preschool.

Our family has directly experienced how critical continuous, high-quality early intervention services are during the earliest years of a child's development. When a child is making steady progress in speech, motor skills, social-emotional development, or other areas, any interruption in services can lead to regression and increased stress for the entire family. The current system, where eligibility for EI often ends based on a child's birthday, creates exactly these avoidable gaps—especially difficult for families whose children have birthdays in the spring or summer months.

S-2834 offers a practical and compassionate solution. By allowing eligible children with birthdays after May 1 to continue receiving EI services through the start of the school year, this bill ensures continuity of care during a vulnerable transition period. It also establishes an Implementation Advisory Committee, which will help ensure a smooth and effective rollout. These changes will directly support families, reduce long-term costs to the education and healthcare systems, and give more children the best possible start.

As a parent, I have seen firsthand how consistent early supports make a lasting difference in a child's confidence, skills, and future readiness for school. Disrupting that progress simply because of a calendar date does not serve our children or our state. I urge you to pass S-2834 so that Rhode Island families can focus on what matters most—helping our children thrive without unnecessary barriers.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important legislation. I respectfully request your support for S-2834.

Sincerely,
Tara Boulais
Providence RI

Sent from my iPhone

Jamie Plume

From: Joseph Potter <jasonpotter37@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 3:10 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: Fwd: Support bill S2835 - Early Intervention: Bridge to Preschool.

You don't often get email from jasonpotter37@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To the Members of the Rhode Island State Education Committee,

My name is Jay Potter, and I am a foster parent here in Rhode Island. I am writing to you not from theory, but from direct experience with the children this legislation will impact.

The bill before you is not abstract. It is about the children I serve every day. These are children who have already experienced abuse, neglect, instability, and loss. They are disproportionately behind developmentally, academically, and emotionally, and far too often, our state fails to provide the level of support necessary to help them recover and succeed.

Early intervention is not optional for these children. It is life-saving.

Consistent, high-quality early childhood services provide structure, safety, and developmental support at a time when it matters most. Without continuity of care, even children who begin to make progress quickly lose momentum. When services drop off before kindergarten, we are effectively resetting their progress and widening gaps that become far more difficult and costly to address later. We are also losing sight of their care.

These programs also serve as critical points of contact. They place trained professionals in the lives of children who might otherwise remain unseen, particularly those living in poverty or experiencing abuse that has not yet been reported. Removing or weakening these services increases the likelihood that vulnerable children will fall through the cracks entirely.

This state continues to allocate significant resources elsewhere, including areas that do not directly address the urgent need of our special education system. The contrast is difficult to ignore when essential services for vulnerable children remain underfunded or at risk.

I urge you to ground your education decisions in the lived reality of the children affected. Visit a Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families child protective services office. Spend time at the Aubin Center. Go and spend 5 hours in a group home and then make decisions that affect these programs. See firsthand the conditions some of these children are coming from. Sit with a three-year-old who weighs what a six-month-old should because he's been starved and neglected to near death. That three year old needs occupational therapy and physical therapy to even lift his head and then consider what it means to delay or deny intervention or cut those services off before he gets to kindergarten.

My son was adopted 4 years ago. He received none of the necessary support during early intervention years for his dwarfism resulting in multiple head injuries due to his lack of occupational and physical

therapy. It took a second mortgage on my house to get him the special education services he needed in kindergarten. We must do better. Bridging this gap is doing better.

These are not hypothetical scenarios. Each one of these children has a name and they are relying on our legislators and this state to intervene when the days matter most. This is the reality many Rhode Island children are living.

There is nothing more important than ensuring that children who need support the most actually receive it, early, consistently, and without interruption. These children are not just part of our future. They are our responsibility right now.

I strongly urge you to protect and expand early childhood services that support Rhode Island's most vulnerable youth.

Sincerely,
Jay Potter

Jamie Plume

From: Tara Hayes <THayes@ripin.org>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 4:09 PM
To: Senate Finance
Cc: Joseph Potter; Family Voices Email
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL]: Support bill S2835 - Early Intervention: Bridge to Preschool.

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Please see the testimony below in Support of S2835.

Best Regards,
Tara



Tara M Hayes, BS, CCHW
Policy, Advocacy, & Family Voices Manager
she/her/hers

☎ 401-270-0101 x139
📠 401-270-7049
🌐 ripin.org



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From: Joseph Potter <jasonpotter37@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 2:43 PM
To: slegislature@rilegislature.gov <slegislature@rilegislature.gov>
Cc: Michelle Machado <mmachado@ripin.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Support bill S2835 - Early Intervention: Bridge to Preschool.

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