



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

25 Howard Avenue, Louis Pasteur Building 57 Cranston, RI 02920
(401) 462-2121

Office of the Director

Kimberly Merolla-Brito

March 12, 2026

The Honorable Melissa A. Murray
Chair, the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: S3024 – An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Department of Human Services
Child Care Licensing Inspectors**

Dear Chair Murray,

I am writing to you regarding S3024, which proposes appropriating funding to hire additional child care licensing inspectors to meet the recommended average set by the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA). The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the opportunity to provide additional information for the committee's consideration.

DHS shares the General Assembly's commitment to ensuring children in Rhode Island are cared for in safe, healthy, and high-quality child care settings. Efficient licensing and monitoring of child care centers and family child care homes are a critical component of that effort.

This proposed legislation would require the state to fund additional child care licensing inspectors to meet the NARA recommended average of one inspector for every 50 to 60 child care providers. While appropriate staffing levels are imperative to ensure effective monitoring for providers, it is important to acknowledge that codifying a specific inspector-to-provider ratio in statute may not provide the flexibility necessary to manage the state's child care licensing system efficiently. The appropriate number of inspectors can vary based on several factors, including the complexity of programs being monitored, provider types, regulatory requirements, geographic distribution, and the use of technology and risk-based monitoring approaches.

Additionally, given the staffing and associated operating costs of this proposal, it is the agency's recommendation that the operational implications be considered with an emphasis on child safety and the stability of the child care system.

We appreciate the General Assembly's partnership in helping promote safe, high-quality environments for children and families across the state that also takes into account the agency's operational planning needs within the budget process framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Merolla-Brito".

Kimberly Merolla-Brito

Director
RI Department of Human Services

CC: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Jacob E. Bissailon
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff to the Senate President
Kylie Lovett, Esq., Director of Policy to the Senate President