



50 Valley Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02909
(401) 444-0600 | www.unitedwayri.org



February 7, 2024

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara Chair,
House Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 7291- AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- Rhode Island Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the House Committee on Education:

The United Way of Rhode Island is writing to express its wholehearted support for the **Rhode Island Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act**. This crucial legislation addresses the pressing need to support our struggling childcare workforce by implementing a comprehensive system to track employment data, shedding light on the indispensable role of early educators.

The childcare workforce plays a pivotal role in the development of our youngest learners, laying the foundation for their future success. However, this sector often faces challenges, including recruitment difficulties, retention issues, and a lack of resources. The Rhode Island Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act represents a significant step forward in addressing these challenges by establishing a systematic approach to monitor and support our dedicated early educators.

A robust data system, as proposed by this Act, will enable the Rhode Island Department of Human Services to produce annual reports on the status of the registry data system and the early care and education workforce. This transparency is vital for understanding the current state of the childcare workforce, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing targeted interventions to enhance support mechanisms.

By supporting this legislation, we acknowledge the critical importance of early educators in shaping the future of our children and ensuring their well-rounded development. The Act not only provides a mechanism to recognize and address the challenges faced by the childcare workforce but also lays the groundwork for a more resilient and effective early care and education system in Rhode Island.

The United Way of Rhode Island encourages you to consider the profound impact that the Rhode Island Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act can have on the lives of our children and the professionals dedicated to their early development. Your support for this legislation is an investment in the well-being and success of our families, youngest children and the future prosperity of our great state.

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.





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Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will make the decision that aligns with the best interests of Rhode Island's children and families.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cortney Nicolato".

Cortney Nicolato
President and CEO

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