

Testimony in support of *H-7291*
Rhode Island Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act
House Committee on Education
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The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports Representative Shallcross Smith's H 7291, which would codify Rhode Island's early care and education workforce registry data system in RI general law, and require the registry to meet national standards. The Act would also direct the Department of Human Services to produce annual reports on the status of the workforce registry system and the early care and education workforce.

Rhode Islanders value safe and quality education for our children and know that quality child care is critical for the success of our economy. The Registry is designed to support front-line child care and early educators by communicating professional development opportunities and other important information. It also provides a comprehensive assessment of the status of our early education and afterschool professionals, including demographics and annual turnover rates for educators in licensed child care and early learning programs. Workforce registries have been proven to provide policy makers with the critical information they need to make informed quality improvements for educators and programs.¹

Rhode Island needs an early care and education workforce registry to support early educators and the broader early education and child care field. Quality early care and education are the building blocks for children's academic success, social-emotional development, and lifelong employment and health outcomes.² Qualified early educators are necessary for Rhode Island's children to have the best outcomes in their future. The current child care workforce faces issues with recruitment, wages, retention and professional development. A statewide early care and education workforce registry data system would directly address these issues via the consistent collection of data and information, which would be used to better support professional development and inform policy decisions.

Representative Shallcross Smith's Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act would ensure that early educators have the professional development they need to succeed and that legislators and other decision makers can make informed policy decisions. We strongly urge passage.

¹ <https://www.registryalliance.org/evolution-of-childcare-workforce-registry/>

²

<https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hi5/earlychildhoodeducation/index.html#:~:text=ECE%20can%20counteract%20the%20disadvantage,employment%2C%20income%2C%20and%20health.>