



Date: February 7, 2024  
To: House Committee on Education  
From: Local Initiatives Support Corporation

**Re: RI Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act (H-7291)**

**In Support**

Chairs and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) I am pleased to express support for the **RI Early Care and Education Workforce Data Act (H-7291) to codify the Rhode Island early care and education workforce registry data system in the general laws bringing Rhode Island to national standards**. Together with residents, partners, and local leaders, LISC Rhode Island forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across our state – great places to live, work, visit, do business, and raise families. Our strategies – investing in real estate, increasing family income & wealth, stimulating economic development, improving access to quality education and supporting healthy environments and lifestyles – work together to improve the health and well-being of our neighbors. Since 1991, LISC has invested \$345 million in neighborhoods across our state, helping to create more than 7,900 affordable homes and support the development of more than 2 million square feet of commercial, child care, educational, and community space. We are committed to building strong neighborhoods and healthy communities where individuals, businesses and families can thrive.

LISC manages the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund (RICCFF). The RICCFF is a public:private partnership that was formed in 2001 and since that time has invested more than \$37 million, and leveraged an additional \$28 million to develop and improve child care facilities statewide. In addition, we have provided intensive technical assistance to more than 200 organizations – non-profit, for-profit, large, and small – focusing on developing new centers, expanding programming, and implementing quality improvements to physical space.

In our work with child care providers and other child care technical assistance providers we have observed first-hand the detrimental impact that insufficient workforce data collection has had across the state. With an effective workforce registry, child care employees and employers would have a centralized tracker for certified employment, training, and education. This would remove the burden from both the employee who must maintain records, and the employer that must verify records. Given the current child care workforce crisis, this would streamline the hiring process for qualified staff. The child care workforce crisis will not be solved with this registry alone, but the data from the system would better track staff turnover, retention rates, qualifications, and more, allowing for a more complete picture of the workforce crisis. Data collection is key in telling the complete story and Rhode Island is one of just six states that lacks the ability to track the trends of the early care and education workforce through a data system.



The RICCF focuses on physical space. Well-designed space is essential to offering quality care that ensures children are safe, healthy, and engaged during their time in child care. However, that space must be staffed with qualified teachers, before it can be filled with Rhode Island's youngest learners. This registry will help ensure that the children of Rhode Island are being cared for by qualified professionals while supplying the data needed to help solve the workforce crisis.

Child care is a vital support for working parents and high-quality care is an essential component of our state's ambitious plans to improve child outcomes and invest in its workforce.

We urge the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Cola". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jeanne Cola  
Executive Director  
LISC Rhode Island