



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

25 Howard Avenue, Louis Pasteur Building 57 Cranston, RI 02920
(401) 462-2121 Fax (401) 462-6594

Office of the Director
Kimberly Merolla-Brito

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7896– An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government– Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Abney:

I am writing to share information regarding House Bill 7896, related to child care licensors. This bill would increase the number of child care licensing inspectors to one inspector for every 50 to 60 child care providers. As the agency responsible for child care licensing, quality, and subsidy, the RI Department of Human Services (DHS) is providing additional information to ensure the committee has all of the information necessary to make an informed decision.

H 7896 references standards from the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) as the broad basis for increasing child care licensing inspectors. However, the association notes the appropriate caseload size, per inspector, should be determined by states individually based on multiple factors. Below, you will find part of the methodology applied by NARA to determine the appropriate caseload size:

“The right caseload for licensors depends on several factors that are unique to your state, territory, or tribe. We’ve divided these factors into five general categories: (1) time spent onsite, (2) number of inspections, (3) travel time, (4) additional licensor responsibilities, and (5) number of working weeks per year. More time onsite, frequent inspections, more travel time, additional licensor responsibilities, and fewer working weeks per year necessitate lower caseloads.”

To determine the appropriate caseload per inspector in Rhode Island, Public Consulting Group (PCG) was commissioned to provide a workload analysis when child care was transferred from DCYF to DHS in 2019. Based on the factors outlined by NARA, and evaluated by PCG, the report concluded that a caseload size of approximately 157 providers per inspector was appropriate for Rhode Island. Currently, RI has approximately 800 child care providers with 6 FTEs performing inspections for a caseload size of 133 per inspector. In addition, we are working to increase the capacity whenever needed, as we have recently increased an FTE in the Licensing Department. As noted by NARA, appropriate caseload sizes vary greatly based on the factor outlined above and as evidenced by the caseload sizes of Massachusetts (212) and Ohio (55).

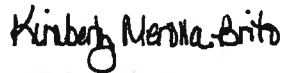
Additionally, the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) monitored the DHS Office of Child Care within the last year, with no findings related to staffing and inspection requirements. The current child care inspector workforce are performing inspections in a timely manner, ensuring the safety of

children, with no significant backlog needing to be addressed.

While we appreciate the committee's support and commitment to helping ensure a safe, high- quality learning environment for children, the addition of approximately 10 FTEs at a cost, in excess of \$1 million, may not lead to significant changes in the absence of any notable inspection backlogs, or audit findings.

Thank you for the opportunity to share additional information regarding H 7896.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Merolla-Brito
Director
RI Department of Human Services

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Julie A. Casimiro
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House of Representatives
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy