

RB 5450 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

Dear Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Sanchez, Senator Bye, Senator Somers, Representative Lavielle and members of the Education Committee:

The qualification for the early childhood education workforce should reflect the current need as well as the necessary pathways to continue to strengthen the entire profession-- this includes 2 and 4 year degrees. I ask you each to forward legislation that includes both associate and bachelor's degrees with a timeline supportive of both quality early care and education in multiple settings and career pathways for the diversity of women in the early childhood profession.

This is a critical moment when all of the various stakeholders working in early childhood understand we need to address the needs of the early childhood workforce with a comprehensive approach. The imperative to do so is the health and well-being of our state's children who are our most valuable social and economic asset. The most crucial reasons why are as follow:

- Early learning is foundational. Those working with children birth to age 8 must be supported to continue their own learning and growth to their own benefit and the benefit of the children and families they serve. I ask we look at creative, collaborative solutions for funding and pathways that can occur in the next 12 months.
- Community-based care and public school educational settings all seek to improve quality. Continued strengthening of the entire profession must be done through lifting up of individual capacity and compensation together. A two-tier reality of care and education not only creates a divide that is a disservice to our children. I ask we work to create viable, visible career pathways that do not truncates the career options for our diverse early childhood workforce.
- Social-emotional learning happens at home, in community-based settings and schools. Given proposed legislation for a special taskforce on social-emotional learning, I ask such an exploration occur with early care and education and our respective state offices involved to make certain the scope includes all of our children

Respectfully submitted,

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