

Dear Senators,

I teach aspiring early childhood educators at Windham Regional Career Center in Brattleboro. I've worked in many roles as an early childhood educator—infant-toddler teacher and preschool teacher. For 11 years, I ran a family child care home, which I later transitioned into a center when a space opened in my town. I worked with Head Start as an educator and supervisor for thirteen years.

I support S.119 and urge you to pass this bill. Since 2019, I have participated in the workforce outreach that led to our recommendations for becoming a recognized profession with licenses to practice. The OPR's recommendations align with our work.

However, not every member of our workforce has been involved or is aware of this proposal, and a lot of misinformation is circulating. This is causing fear among people who have not yet heard about how the future system created by S.119 supports them.

I want to reinforce for you that S.119 supports every member of our current workforce, as well as our future workforce. The future workforce is in my classroom today. My high school students are eager to learn, earn college credits, do fieldwork, and graduate qualified for licensure at ECE I. They're not intimidated by coursework or licensure requirements—they're motivated and proud of their growing expertise.

And the resources are there. My students take advantage of free college classes, scholarships, and grants to earn associate and bachelor's degrees without overwhelming student debt. When students see a clear career path, they stay in the field. A license to practice means workforce retention.

I support S:119 because every child deserves a high-quality early learning experience, and that starts with well-prepared educators. More than anything, this bill is about creating a system that will lead to the best outcomes for children. I am proud to support it and urge you to pass it.

Sincerely,

Kim Freeman