



Public Testimony  
House Finance Committee  
Re: Child Care Assistance (House Bill 7115 and House Bill 7236)  
April 27, 2016

Submitted by The Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty

Contact: Emily Jones, Interfaith Coordinator  
[RIinterfaithcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:RIinterfaithcoalition@gmail.com)  
Office: 401-421-4111, ext. 161  
Cell: 203-858-0420

Good afternoon. My name is Emily Jones and I'm speaking on behalf of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, a coalition of diverse religious communities and advocacy partners throughout the state who have come together to fight poverty.

I am testifying today to voice our organization's strong support for two bills that increase access to affordable child care: House Bill 7115 and House Bill 7236.

For many working families, child care consumes an outsized portion of the family budget – far more than what we would consider affordable based on family income. Over the years, Rhode Island's child care assistance program has provided significant, much-needed support to many low-income families, allowing children to access safe, high-quality child care while their parents are working or preparing for work.

We support increased access to the child care assistance program as laid out in House Bill 7115 and House Bill 7236.

- House Bill 7115: We support raising the entry eligibility limit for sliding-scale support to include those who earn between 180 percent and 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Access to the child care assistance program would substantially ease the child care cost burden for many struggling families.
- House Bill 7236: The Child Care Exit Income Pilot program is set to expire on September 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. We support making permanent the exit income limit of 225 percent of the federal poverty level. This protects families from facing a child care cost “cliff” that sets them back, financially, just as they are beginning to make forward progress.

In addition, we continue to believe that caring for children should never be a poverty-wage job. Recognizing the vital and sacred nature of this work, we support efforts to ensure that child care workers earn a decent wage for both home- and center-based services.

We all have good reason to invest in the future of our state's children, both pragmatic and moral. Many of our faith traditions teach us of the special obligation we have to our communities' youngest members. Meanwhile, research has consistently shown the lifelong benefits of high-quality early childhood care and education. We encourage you to expand access to the child care assistance program.

Thank you for your dedicated public service.