



April 29, 2026

Chair Hanna Gallo  
Senate Education Committee  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: In opposition to Whip Tikoian's S2433, re Bright Stars

Dear Chair Gallo and members of the Committee:

We write in opposition to S2433. While we appreciate the desire to support high-quality early learning programs, we are concerned that this bill would interfere with Rhode Island's BrightStars quality rating and improvement system for a select category of programs, rather than preserving one consistent standard for all providers.

For over 190 years, Children's Friend has worked to advance the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's youngest and most vulnerable children. Today, we operate a range of early childhood programs, including child care, Head Start, and state-funded Pre-K, and we have invested significant time, resources, and staff effort in meeting Rhode Island's quality expectations.

Our concern with S2433 is straightforward: Rhode Island should not create special presumptions within the BrightStars system for one subset of providers. BrightStars has been carefully developed over many years as the state's recognized framework for measuring, supporting, and communicating quality in early care and education. BrightStars exists to establish a common, credible, statewide approach to quality. If the state begins modifying how ratings apply for select populations or specific settings, it risks weakening the integrity, fairness, and comparability of the system as a whole.

This concern is especially important because BrightStars is not merely symbolic. Rhode Island has long linked reimbursement rates to program quality, including provider BrightStars ratings. State child care reimbursement rates are impacted by a provider's BrightStars rating, and tiered reimbursement has been used to support higher-quality care. Any statutory change that alters how some programs are treated within the rating system could therefore have implications beyond recognition alone; it could also affect the consistency and credibility of the reimbursement structure built on those ratings.

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Children's Friend strongly believes that if changes are needed within BrightStars, they should be considered through the established quality improvement and regulatory process, with attention to how those changes affect the full early learning system. They should not be made piecemeal in a way that creates exceptions for one category of provider while leaving the broader framework less clear and potentially less trusted.

We all share the goal of supporting high-quality early learning for Rhode Island children. But that goal is best served by maintaining a strong, consistent, and credible BrightStars system that applies fairly across settings and continues to serve as the basis for quality improvement and reimbursement policy. For these reasons, Children's Friend respectfully urges you to hold S2433 for further study.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony, and for your continued efforts to support the children who are the future of our State. If you have further questions or need any additional information, please contact me at [dcaprio@cfsri.org](mailto:dcaprio@cfsri.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Caprio".

David Caprio  
President and CEO