



December 13, 2021

The Hon. Jason Lewis, Chair
The Hon. Alice Peisch, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Testimony in support of S.362/H.605, *An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care*

Dear Chairman Lewis and Chair Peisch:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of One Family, Inc. in support of S.362/H.605, *An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care*, sponsored by Chairman Lewis and Representatives Gordon and Madaro.

One Family is a Massachusetts nonprofit that prevents family homelessness by helping low-income parents achieve academic and career success. Our approach to homelessness prevention includes direct-service programs, training and technical assistance, and public policy advocacy. Our direct-service programs – One Family Scholars and Credential to Career Coaching (“C2C”) – have a [track record](#) of enabling families to make progress towards and achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

Through [One Family Scholars](#), each year we help 100 low-income single parents pursue college degrees, so they can build family-sustaining careers, and put a roof over their families’ heads. We do this through individualized coaching, scholarships, and incentive-based stipends. And over the past four years, through [C2C](#), we have helped approximately 190 low-income parents identify family-sustaining careers that match their skills and interests, and create and implement individualized plans to earn the credentials they need and enter those careers.

In addition to our direct-service programs, we provide technical assistance to service providers and government agencies, leveraging our expertise and highly-efficient strategies around supporting Massachusetts families on the road to self-sufficiency. In this capacity, we engage with partners across the Commonwealth, impacting over 2,200 families to date. Finally, we also work in coalition to advocate for state and federal investments in family homelessness prevention and economic opportunity, empowering One Family Scholars and C2C participants to use their voice as part of these advocacy efforts.

While our One Family Scholars and Credential to Career Coaching Participants – and thousands of other low income parents across the Commonwealth – are determined to succeed, there are a range of barriers to overcome along the way. For many of them, one of the biggest obstacles to achieving self-sufficiency, and the long-term housing stability that comes with it, is limited access to affordable childcare. Without affordable childcare that families can depend on, it is extremely difficult – often impossible – for low-income parents to obtain college degrees or other credentials needed to enter family-sustaining careers, and to maintain steady employment.

Enacting S.362/H.605, *An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care*, would remove this major obstacle. This is must-pass legislation that will enable struggling Massachusetts families to make progress towards and ultimately achieve self-sufficiency, so that they can afford a home for their family.

We urge the Committee to report this important legislation favorably, and we further urge the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee members to reach out to House and Senate leadership in support of its enactment. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this critically-needed legislation, which we are proud to support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Paric', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Valerie Paric
Executive Director

cc: Representative Kenneth Gordon, Representative Adrian Madaro