



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Education  
In support of H.605/S.362 An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early  
education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy  
in the Commonwealth  
By Karen Mazza, LWVMA Specialist on Education Policy  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues across the state, supports H.605/S.362 An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care. This bill offers a financial framework and bedrock funding that will make early childhood education affordable, while also supporting high quality care standards. Professional development grants for early childhood education providers and higher compensation will also contribute to high quality services, making a career in early childhood education viable and attracting a larger employment pool. Overall, the bill will be a win-win for families, children, providers, and educators.

The League of Women Voters at both the state and national level have long been advocates for support for early care and early childhood education. The League believes that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for education attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. The lack of a "common start" or "head start" in education leads to differences in academic achievement in school. The League supports equal educational opportunity and support for access to early childhood education and care should be the next frontier of Massachusetts' commitment to educational opportunity and helping all students succeed. That commitment, initiated by the Education Reform Legislation of 1993, cannot be fulfilled without financial support and access to a strong high quality network of early childhood care and education.

The League of Women Voters supports programs, services, and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty. This legislation will also be a win for businesses, when parents are freed up to enter the workforce. The consequences of lack of child care have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and it has given higher visibility to the need for child care in order to be able to participate in the workforce. The ability to participate in the workforce will, in turn, help many parents struggling with low income to lift their families out of poverty. Middle income families also struggle with the ability to participate in the workforce due to child care, either taking on excessive costs beyond a reasonable share of their income, or juggling weekend and night work schedules that reduce family time and add to family stress.

With the framework established in this legislation, a comprehensive structure to support affordable high quality early education and care is within reach. Other organizations have researched the present status and resources for early childhood education in Massachusetts and have projected what it would take for Massachusetts to phase in implementation of funding over



five years. We refer you to the work of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center in their April 28, 2021 report, “Care for Our Commonwealth: The Cost of Universal, Affordable, High-Quality Early Care and Education Across Massachusetts.”<sup>1</sup> The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges the committee to report this bill favorably. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> “Care for Our Commonwealth: The Cost of Universal, Affordable, High-Quality Early Care & Education Across Massachusetts,” Colin Jones, Senior Policy Analyst, with Marcus Giang, Communications & Research Analyst, April 28, 2021, Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center, <https://massbudget.org/>