



**Legislation Summary:**

**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**

**(Common Start)**

Initial bill number(s): H.489/S.301 (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Representatives Kenneth Gordon and Adrian Madaro and Senators Jason Lewis and Susan Moran

**What the bill does, why LWVMA supports or opposes it, and the League position relative to this bill.**

This bill provides a framework to increase the scope of public investment in early education and child care with an incremental roll-out over 5 years that prioritizes the lowest-income, highest-need families. It would dramatically increase the affordability and quality of early education and child care for all Massachusetts families. The bill's framework uses a combination of direct-to-provider funding and ongoing family financial assistance to reduce costs to families while compensating providers for the true cost of providing quality care.

- **Bedrock funding:** The legislation would create a new direct-to-provider funding allocation based on provider capacity (not attendance) that directly offsets provider's operating costs, including higher educator pay.
- **Family subsidy:** Once fully implemented, families below 50% of statewide median income (50% of SMI today is \$62,668 for a family of four, or \$42,614 for a single parent with one child) would be able to access early education and child care options for free. Families with incomes above that threshold would pay no more than 7 percent of their total household income.

This program would be administered through the Early Education and Care Department. Provisions that would increase quality of care include:

- An early education and child care professional development grant program
- A compensation structure for staff who directly provide early education and care, commensurate with equivalent K-12 teaching positions.

## League Positions:

The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children. The League believes that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. [Impact on Issues](#) p.132

The League 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. [Impact on Issues](#) p.151