



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

**Testimony of Elizabeth C. Brown
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Connecticut Commission on Children**

**Before the Human Services Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
February 5, 2009**

Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Elizabeth C. Brown and I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on proposed bills address efficiencies in the early care and education system, expansion of Care4Kids child care subsidy program, and provision for housing to families seeking emergency shelter.

H.B. 5841, An Act Concerning a Uniform Reporting Form For Preschool and Child Care Programs

Connecticut operates a fragmented early care and education system administered by various funding streams and different state agencies including the Departments of Education, Social Services, and Public Health. The bill before you seeks to establish a uniform reporting requirement cross programs to streamline procedures and identify the most appropriate information necessary to collect for accountability and program performance. This effort at efficiency will help coordinate state programs into a single system and relieve overburdened administrators of unnecessary, duplicative paper work. The uniform reporting requirement should include fiscal information, attendance tracking, accreditation information, and staffing credential information. The Department of Social Service with foresight has assisted in this effort, by funding the Connecticut Charts A Course Registry that is a central data collection for DSS and SDE funded programs. This can serve as a model for collecting information throughout the system to ensure accountability, and monitoring of performance measures.

H.B. 5426, An Act Concerning Child Care Subsidies for the Unemployed Under Care 4 Kids Program

The bill seeks to expand the child care subsidy for families who are unemployed. With the tremendous unemployment figures facing Connecticut workers, unfortunately, low income workers are the hardest hit by job loss. In order to bridge the gap between job loss and employment, it makes sense to provide this emergency measure to these families. It will afford the necessary child care to make it possible for parents to look and find a job. More importantly, it will provide children continuity in child care and prevent the stress and emotional upheaval of

constantly moving from one caregiver to another. These are extraordinary times and this measure should be seen as essential as extension of unemployment insurance or expansion of food stamps.

H.B. 5231 An Act Concerning A Pilot Program to Provide Housing to Families Seeking Emergency Shelter

The Commission is a member of the advisory committee for the Coalition to End Homelessness. For the past few years a concerted effort was undertaken to identify the root causes of homelessness and to identify the best way to use limited resources. The bill before you will field test the results of the research and reallocate dollars from the Departments of Social Service, Children and Families and Economic and Community Development to initiate a rapid response strategy to prevent homelessness in an effort to maintain stable housing for the families. If successful, this will provide a blueprint for better use of existing dollars and facilitate strategic coordination among state agencies to focus on helping families to maintain housing. The Commission commends Carol Walter for her leadership in bringing the stakeholders together and the willingness of the state agencies to partner in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration of these important initiatives to help families in these dire financial times.