

March 6, 2007

**Testimony Regarding House Bill 7302: An Act Concerning Rates Paid to Providers
Under the Child Care Subsidy Program**

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Senator Harris, Representative Villano and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity here today to express my support of HB 7302 regarding increases in the Care 4 Kids rates.

I have been operating a home child care facility for the past two years, and have cared for children whose parents relied on Care 4 Kids in order to pay the weekly fees. Let me start by saying that I do not charge an exorbitant amount, in fact I charge what is average here in New Britain. I also am not "getting rich" off of this, as is widely the myth about home day care providers. In fact I make just enough money to supplement a portion of what I could make in the corporate world doing something else.

So, why, you ask do I do it? Believe me it is not because it is "an easy job," or because I "don't want to find another job." It is because early child care and education is so important to the framework of our society. It should be top priority to mold children into the good and smart people they have so much potential to become. At the tender ages in which children are in a day care setting they are such "sponges" that it is imperative that they learn and are nurtured in a loving, safe and educational environment. No one can do this better than a child's parents, but that is not the world we live in today. We live in a society that undervalues its workers and forces parents to work at least one full time job leaving their children to day care. What we as child care providers do is priceless and should be compensated equitably. Yet in order to do this our clients, those underpaid parents, need to pay our living wage prices, and in order for them to do that, short of the "unthinkable" of raising wages, services like Care 4 Kids needs to be fully supported and funded, and rates need to be increased for families.

Finally, while the Governor made a number of important proposals, is surprising to me that home child care was not addressed. Programs such as mine and the many others around the state are critical to give families the choices for quality care that they need for their children.

I urge you to help make this state better, not by catering to the 5% of people in this state by giving tax breaks and cuts to the rich, but by putting children first and making sure that our future is brighter through them.

Thank you for your time.