

TO: Human Services Committee

DATE: March 13, 2007

RE: Raised Bill No. 1382 An Act concerning Professional Assistance to Persons Providing Child Care Assistance

Dear Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Michealle Hunter and I run an in home licensed daycare in Bridgeport for the past 4 years.

I urge you to support Bill 1382, An Act Concerning Professional Assistance to Persons Providing Child Care Assistance. I love my job and put the children's best interest in mind. I believe the best way to make improvements in our childcare system is to collectively bargain with the state. There is strength in numbers and providers want to form a union to improve our working conditions so that we can improve the education and potential of children at an early age.

For example, I know that Care 4 Kids program is based on providing subsidy to low income families who needs assistance. This is a great service that the State provides to families who truly need it. I am paid once a month and it is not predictable what my pay will be and if a parent will be accepted or not into the program. I see taking a Care 4 Kids child as taking a chance if I will be paid in a timely manner. Perhaps, we can increase the eligibility of Care 4 kids, as they have in Oregon, where now the eligibility cutoff for child care assistance from 150 percent of the federal poverty level to 185 percent, which reduces the parent co pays by 20 percent. Daily I encounter parents who need assistance and are not granted it.

I am also supporting this bill because it gives incentive for unlicensed providers to become licensed in Section 2a. By becoming licensed we will gain a stronger and more stable environment for the children. In Illinois, Washington, and Oregon, the rates have had a higher increase for licensed care rather than licensed exempt. This is a suggestion to apply here.

Health insurance is also a major concern for me. Having reliable and affordable health insurance is necessary for providers to do their job. If I am sick and cannot not go to work than neither can the parents of the children I care for. I am currently on the HUSKY program. I would like to have health insurance through my job instead of relying on the state. I am scarred I may get let at anytime from this program.

Allotting grant money to providers for services such as education, parenting education and involvement, speech and language development, facility maintenance and repair and education consulting services are major ways we can make improvements.

Please support this bill and let us work together to provide the best possible environment
for the children we love.

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