

To: Members of the Human Services Committee:

**Testimony in support of Raised Bill #1382: AN ACT CONCERNING
PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS PROVIDING CHILD CARE
ASSISTANCE**

My name is Vera Baz and I run a licensed daycare in my home in Meriden. I have been a teacher for more than fifteen years, first for a traditional center and now in my home. Although the children I care for enjoy a nurturing, homelike environment, they also receive early childhood education and social skills. Their parents depend on me to keep their kids safe and get them ready to succeed in school. Home based care is an option many families prefer and I provide this important service for the state and for the community.

Running my own daycare center has its joys and challenges. I have invested a lot into my center but the state's reimbursement rates are low and I do not have affordable health insurance. I take two very expensive medications. If I am not healthy then I cannot meet my obligations to the kids. We need to be able to negotiate for an affordable plan for daycare providers. In the meantime, the grants provided for in this bill would help me pay for health insurance.

Despite my years of experience, I do not have a voice in regulations or licensing requirements. I have seriously considered closing my daycare but I would rather not have to. I used to have a group daycare center with a partner; we were able to serve

twelve kids. Unfortunately, we were not able to pay all the bills with the compensation we received from the state and my partner had to quit. If I had to close my doors, six more families and their workplaces would be affected.

A majority of family daycare providers in the state are uniting to gain a greater voice in decisions that affect the delivery of care. We believe the freedom to join a union will raise standards and keep experienced providers from leaving. Across the country, home based providers working with SEIU, our union, have been able to increase access to daycare for more families and increase training opportunities. We would like to enjoy the same freedom here but Connecticut law prevents us from having the right to have union representation. I urge you to support this bill, RB.1382, and grant us collective bargaining rights as well as some help to pay our bills in these difficult times. Thank-you for taking the time to read my letter.

Vera Baz

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