

Labor and Public Employees Committee
RB Number 7034

To: Senator Prague, Rep. Ryan and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Louise Abate and I live in New Haven. I am writing in support of **RB 7034, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR IN-HOME SUBSIDIZED DAYCARE PROVIDERS.**

I run a licensed in-home daycare center and have been taking care of children for twenty-seven years. I am accredited by the National Association for Family Day Care and I serve on the board of All Our Kin, a daycare providers' association. I have a vision of how the system of in-home early childhood education can be improved in this state. Unfortunately we family daycare providers don't have a real voice to convey this vision.

I serve a full complement of six young children plus three before and after school. In my home, children are taught critical skills they will need to succeed in school. The parents of my charges go to work reassured that their kids are learning and nurtured in my home. However some common-sense changes need to happen in the system as regulated by the state.

My own daughter is now twenty-one and I am fortunate to be able to continue my studies toward my Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. From talking with other providers, I know that it is not easy to make the time to attend classes. Others complain of a lack of training opportunities. Currently there is no financial incentive to obtaining your CDA, Child Development Associate Credential, the first step toward certification. We need to have more say in the access and substance of education and training. It's for this reason I am uniting with other providers in a union. Who better than providers themselves to speak to the best methods to

improve the delivery of home-based care?

Through our union, SEIU, the providers in Illinois and in Washington state have created incentives and more educational opportunities for providers. They have worked together to raise standards and ensure that experienced providers continue to offer the kind of daycare that half of families prefer. However, here in Connecticut current law does not grant us the freedom to choose union representation.

Over the years I have made suggestions on how state regulations and training could be improved. For example, currently, I can care for my school-age children during winter and spring school vacations but when summer comes I have to turn them away. This inconsistency in the regulations should be addressed so that families aren't made to separate their siblings and find alternative care for them in the summers.

Another problem with the system as designed is that certification in different medical procedures all expire on different dates. Keep in mind, that we are working every minute of our day. My day begins at 6:30 because that's when families need me. Why have providers get recertified in First Aid, Medication Administration, EpiPen Administration and CPR on four different dates? Requirements like this would be improved if we had a voice. I urge you to give us the freedom to choose union representation by supporting this bill, RB 7034. Thank-you for your efforts.

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