Labor and Public Employee Committee
RB No. 7034

Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Ryan and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Marcia Federico and I live in New Haven. I run a licensed in-home daycare center and I have provided care for children for twenty four years.

I am here today to speak in support of RB 7034, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR IN-HOME SUBSIDIZED DAYCARE PROVIDERS.

First I want to tell you a little about my day, it starts at 7:30 AM, serving breakfast to six full-time children and three children that I care for before and after school. Once breakfast is over I may be warming a bottle for a crying baby, getting a toddler a drink of water and monitoring several other children playing with toys, books and blocks pretty much simultaneously.

I love the children that I care for each day. I give them the same care and education I would my own child. When these toddlers start kindergarten they already know their colors and their ABC's. The children know how to share with others and to show respect for adults. They also have great table manners. I am not a glorified babysitter, I am a childcare professional caring and educating someone's most prized possession, their child.

I and many other daycare providers in Connecticut would like the respect that we deserve. There are a couple of issues we find distressing in our field. The first is we are without an affordable health insurance plan for self-employed daycare providers. High premiums in Connecticut leave many of us without health insurance.

The other issue is the subsidies that we receive from Care 4 Kids. The budget cuts to this program have made it increasingly hard for parents to receive the financial assistance they need. Most parents applying for subsidies are trying to get off public assistance to support their families on their own. Unfortunately when they apply, they do not get the support that they need. Once parents have paid for childcare they are left with a pay check that makes it hard to support their family. This is very stressful for the parent and the provider. I try to be flexible and reasonable in the fees that I charge as a provider, but I have to support myself as well. This system needs to consider the reality of the needs our citizens. Over the past two years I have seen subsidy payments decrease, therefore taking away needed resources from a child once again.

A majority of family daycare providers like me have decided that together we can improve the system. We believe that with a union we can make a difference in the lives of the children we care for, their families and ourselves. We currently do not have the right to collectively bargain under the statutes of the state of Connecticut. In Illinois and Washington, where family day care providers already have right to collectively bargain, providers are working with their states to increase training opportunities and incentives, develop affordable health plans and help families gain

access to badly needed childcare.

I believe that working together as part of a union is a good way for us to resolve issues and improve standards. I ask you to give us the freedom to choose representation by supporting RB no. 7034. Thank you.

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