

TO: Human Services Committee

DATE: March 6, 2007

RE: Raised Bill No. 7302, An Act Concerning Rates Paid to Providers Under the Child Care Subsidy Program

Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Karen Mahoney. I live in Bridgeport, I run a licensed in-home child care center and have done so for the past 5 years

I urge you to support Raised Bill Number 7302, An Act Concerning Rates Paid to Providers Under the Child Care Subsidy Program

In 2001, I had a full-time corporate job with health benefits. When the company went out of business, I decided to open an in-home day care center. I have four children of my own. Now I work full time again, but this time I do not have access to affordable health care. Even though I am insured through the HUSKY program, many doctors that I used to see do not accept my HUSKY insurance and I am now forced to go to a clinic. Even my dentist will no longer see me because HUSKY pays him very late. Please increase the rates paid to myself and all other providers so I do not have to choose between my health and my mortgage.

I love my job, but I would like to make a living wage for it. I make less than \$4.00 an hour. The subsidy pay is so low that I literally live paycheck to paycheck and I am always behind. Please reimburse my services through the Care 4 Kids program at a rate that is equal to the average reimbursement rate as determined by the most recent child care market survey.

One of the parents, Keisha, will be 18 years old next month and is still in high school. She has a 2 year old daughter, Carol. Keisha is ineligible for a Care 4 Kids Subsidy because she is under 18. The State of Connecticut expects that Keisha's mother will pay for Carol's daycare, but Keisha's Mother is unable or unwilling to pay for daycare, and Keisha cannot pay herself. If I don't help them, Keisha will be forced to drop out of high school. What am I supposed to do? Some weeks I get no money, and other weeks I have to pressure the grandmother to give me payment.

I would like to pursue my Child Development Associate (CDA) degree, but I simply cannot afford it. If I had access to more education and training, I could be more effective in preparing the children for kindergarten.

There is a childcare crisis in Connecticut, and that childcare crisis cannot wait. Everyday is a crucial learning day for the children I care for: Carol, 2 years old, Brian 2 years old, Mark 13 months, Michael, 7 years old, David, 2 and a half years old, and Joy, 16 months old. Please Support Raised Bill Number 7302. Give us the opportunity to make a living wage based on the viable service I provide to the state.

Sincerely,

Karen Mahoney

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