

TO: Human Services Committee

March 13, 2007

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

Good afternoon, Senator Harris, Representative Villano and Members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Queen Freelove and I live in New Haven and I run a licensed in-home child care center. I am here today to speak in support of Bill number 1382, **An Act Concerning Professional Assistance to Persons Providing Child Care Assistance.**

Childcare providers make a profound difference in the children's lives. I don't just look after children – I am an educator. I provide a safe and caring place where kids can learn and grow which gives them a good start as they move on to pre-school and kindergarten.

Parents choose home-based child care providers like me because they want that warm home environment for their children, and they want their kids to benefit from consistent, quality care. But every year more and more providers leave the profession because of low wages, a lack of access to affordable health care, and most importantly, because we have no voice to improve things.

Giving in-home state subsidized day care providers the freedom to collectively bargain, like they do in Illinois and Washington State, will give us a stronger voice to work together with the state to raise standards. It will help improve the quality and consistency of childcare by helping experienced providers continue to serve our communities. Through collective bargaining we hope to gain better opportunities for training and incentives to improve quality. Home-based providers know what it takes to provide quality care for children, and giving us a stronger voice is the best way for Connecticut to reduce turnover and keep our children safe and well cared for.

Secondly, as a provider, I treat the children in my day care as if they are my own, and I want the best for them. According to Section 2b, with accessible grant money, I can take the children on trips to museums in New Haven, purchase more art supplies, books, and educational toys. Although I would like to buy these supplies now, I am unable to because I do not have enough funds. When they State instructs me to fix something in my home, for the safety of the little ones, I can do that with facility maintenance and repair grant money. Please support Raised Bill 1382, and let us all be responsible and

provide the best educational resources and safe environment for the children. Support Raised Bill 1382. Providers deserve to have a say in the conditions we work in for 11 hours a day, the right to affordable quality health care, and the children deserve all the best education they can receive at this early age. Thank you for your time.

Queen Freelove

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