

Testimony Regarding

Bill No. 1396

An Act Concerning the State Purchase of Service Contracts for Health and Human Services

Public Hearing March 13, 2007

History:

State Funded Centers (SFC) were established by the legislature in 1967 under the Department of Social Services. We have been serving low-moderate income families for over 35 years. We are mandated to provide 80% of a child's daily nutrition needs. We are NAEYC Accredited and provide quality care and education. State Funded Centers benefit families statewide.

Why Bill 1396 is important

If the State Funded Centers unit rate system goes out to bid, there will be a loss of continuity of care and services.

- In September we have a big change in enrollment. If the slots that we have change in January with our new contracts those families may no longer have childcare. When the slots go to other centers, those centers could already have families that would qualify. Then where will my families go?
- Plainville Day Care Center services children from age three through eight. Families establish partnerships with staff that last through their children's early elementary school years.
- Because of our sliding scale fee parents have been able to further their education through schooling and special training programs. They then secure improved employment opportunities and provide a better life for their families. What better example to children than to show them the importance of education and break the dependency on state aid? How will they be able to accomplish this if they don't know whether they will have care in January?
- SFCs have established supportive relationships with their towns, collaborative and financial. Some centers contract directly with DSS others are sponsored by their municipalities.
- I have a question about the substituted wording in (c) The secretary may waive the competitive procurement requirements set forth in chapter 55a with respect to any contract between a state agency and a private provider of human services. Will this wording allow the waiver to apply to State Funded Centers that are sponsored through their municipalities.
- Loss of funding would effect the SFCs' staffing. It would effect wages and benefits making it difficult to retain and hire qualified staff. In turn making it difficult to meet the qualifications to continue NAEYC Accreditation.
- The Plainville Day Care Center is funded for 29 Preschool slots and 9 School-age slots. This is 82% of our enrollment. There are other centers that have higher percentages. If we were to lose these allotted slots the financial impact could be so great that we could be forced to close.

We have been working with The Department of Social Services and the State of Connecticut for 37 years. It has been a wonderful partnership. Together we have been able to help many Plainville families obtain their financial independence and their children receive the quality they expect from Plainville Day Care Center.

PLEASE PASS BILL 1396

Sincerely,



Regina Pirro

Executive Director Plainville Day Care Center