

Good evening members of the committee and thank you for the opportunity to present to you tonight.

My name is Georgia Goldburn and I am the Director of Hope For New Haven. Hope For New Haven is a Christian-based non-profit that operates a child development center in New Haven that has the capacity to serve 66 infants, toddlers, preschool and school aged children. As many of you are aware, there is a critical shortage of childcare in CT. There are many contributing factors, but cost remains the major hurdle for providers to enter into or expand this much needed area of service. There will be many testimonies from families who will speak to the importance of having access to subsidies like Care 4 Kids. I can attest that for many of our families, C4K is a most important source of support.

But families are not the only ones who rely upon Care 4 Kids. Private providers like Hope CDC would find it nearly impossible to operate without this subsidy. The average center in New Haven charges \$240 per week for full time infant and toddler care (which is in line with our charges). As one of the few I/T providers, our actual cost is closer to \$280 per child. For many of our families, that weekly amount is equal to or greater than the cost of their entire mortgage or rent. Care 4 Kids provides the much-needed bridge between these families ability to pay and the cost of service.

Esteemed committee members, I work with individuals who approach every day with an earnest desire to nurture and to educate the little one with whom we have been entrusted. They sometimes forgo salaries for a day or two and give generously of their time in order for us to operate within the constraints of a lean budget, without sacrificing quality or safety. And our situation is not unique. Our industry is replete with stories of child-care administrators who make that sacrifice on a monthly basis.

There are many individuals not present here today, who have committed to do whatever

it takes daily to ensure that the best outcomes for these precious little ones are not deferred because of their parent's capacity to pay. Our resolve will undoubtedly be tested in this current economic climate. Many centers will be shuttered under the weight of strained budgets. This impact will be felt across the board, whether a family is a low-, medium- or high-income earner.

We know that the current economic climate severely limits the choices for everyone.

We have to make tough choices in our program around salaries, supplies, and professional development, even in the face of increasing levels of accountability. Some of our families are making even tougher choices in their personal budgets, opting to put their children in unregulated care because their choice is between food, housing, health care or childcare. And as you weigh the testimony and the needs of so many who are before you tonight, your choices will not be easy, either.

In closing, I urge the committee to preserve the current level of Care 4 Kids to ensure that investments in early care and education are not harmed.

Georgia Goldburn
Director
Hope For New Haven, Inc.