

Testimony of Rhonda Butler

Family Child Care Provider, Branford CT

In support of SB 1106, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION

Education Committee

March 7, 2011

My name is Rhonda Butler. I am a child care provider and owner and operator of "Rhonda's Rompers Family Child Care Home" in Branford for the last 32 years. I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill#1106.

In addition to running my child care I have been a member of Second Homes Family Child Care Association for the past 17 years. I currently hold the office of co-president of this organization, a position I have held for 5 years.

Our members receive over 15 hours of training a year by childhood educators who present at our monthly meetings. Our members also attend training workshops to earn certificates in infant and child CPR, medication administration and infant and child first aid including epi-pen administration. None of this training is free. In addition many of us also pay out of pocket to attend conferences and workshops to further educate ourselves with child care topics which enhance our skills.

Parents employ me to care for their children not only because they appreciate the home setting but because of the many positive aspects of family child care. The children in my care enjoy a nurturing and safe environment which is literature-rich with age-appropriate curriculums and activities. They receive good nutrition and develop social and language as well as academic skills. I have the privilege to include music, yoga and sign language programs by hiring teachers that come to my home to share their gifts. I presently have nine families with children ranging in age 19 months to 12 years of age. The parents depend on my dedication to be there for them and to be part of a team effort of raising their precious children.

It's becoming increasingly difficult to afford to keep my business open. I am aware of many providers who already have closed their child cares simply because they couldn't

afford to stay open. Subsidies from Care4Kids have not increased with the higher cost of living and the rising costs of providing quality care. It is truly sad that I am among a number of providers who not only struggle to stay open but cannot afford health insurance for myself or my family. The hardship it would cause to the nine families I serve would undermine their ability to keep their jobs—a vicious circle of consequence.

The positive aspects of uniting with other child care providers by supporting Senate Bill #1106 are quite clear. It will provide not only a greater voice with the state but will help retain the very experienced and capable providers we so desperately need for our future generations. Please show your support for this bill, it is imperative for this to happen now!

With sincerest respect,

Rhonda Butler
224 Harbor Street
Branford, CT 06405
(203) 488-6595