

59

Testimony of Heather Greene, Waterbury Parent - 2/8/11

Re: HB 5293 - AN ACT EXTENDING THE "CARE 4 KIDS" PROGRAM TO FAMILIES WITH A PARENT WHO IS ACTIVELY SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

My name is Heather Greene. I am from Waterbury, Connecticut and a parent from Connecticut Parent Power.

I am here today in support of HB 5293, which would help families like mine keep our children in childcare while we look for work. I want you to hear why this is so important.

I am a married mother of two beautiful girls, ages 11 years and 4 years. My husband, Tim, worked most of his life in the sanitation industry. In fact he worked for the same company for over 17 years. He was even friends with the owner. When the owner decided to sell his small company, I wasn't too worried because my husband asked the new owner if he should start looking for a new job, because he has a family to support and a new baby too. The new owner told him not to worry.

As the months went by, my husband saw them fire people one by one. My husband again asked if he should look for another job, and again they told him not to.

Can you believe that less than a week later, they let my husband go!

Tim started applying at other companies and, because he was a good worker, landed a position. They worked him really hard and it began to take a toll on him, I guess due to his age. This company ended up firing him one day before his benefits were to kick in. Things were not looking good at all.

Tim didn't give up though, he again went out until he found another position that he held for about 6 months, before being let go once again.

I ended up taking on two part-time jobs, while my husband collected unemployment and continued searching for another job. This was happening right after losing the place we called home. We just couldn't afford it and had to move.

Recently, an ex co-worker decided to start his own small sanitation company. He asked my husband if he would be willing to drive without any pay until they were able to secure enough customers. My husband decided he would, and I decided I needed to go down to one part-time job while he did this.

At the same time this was happening, my 3 year old was able to start preschool at a local center close to our home. I needed her to go because she was afraid of other children her age. She really needed the socialization with her peers.

When applying for Care 4 Kids, I was not approved because they said that my husband was able to stay home and care for my 3 year old.

How are people supposed to find work if they have their children with them all of the time?

There are interviews, filling out applications, and jobs can come from volunteering, and many other ways too. This all takes time.

Today, I am still unapproved for Care 4 Kids, and I still work part-time and my husband is still working without pay. The company is still growing consistently, but then the truck breaks down and they are back at square one. It is part of running a business. Tim is hanging in there though, waiting for the company to first be able to pay him, and hopefully in the future to be able to be paid to manage the company as he gets older in age.

Today my husband is in his early 50's, and as much as he aches after working each day, he still keeps going in the hopes that he is making a better life for his family down the road.

Parents work really hard provide for our children. With this economy, it is almost impossible right now, but if more families were able to utilize the Care 4 Kids program that would really help us. I, personally, might be able to work more hours if Care 4 Kids helped our family.

Passing HB 5293 is a chance to help Connecticut's residents get back to work and help the economy here in Connecticut.

Thank you for taking the time to hear me.

**Heather Greene
227 Robbins Street, #3
Waterbury, CT 06708
dorysblue@sbcglobal.net**