

March 12, 2012

Labor and Public Employees Committee
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
860-240-0540

Re: 3/13/12 Agenda 2. S.B. No. 352 RAISED) AN ACT CREATING A PROCESS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE. 2:30 PM in Room 1B of the LOB

I am AGAINST of An Act Creating A Process For Family Child Care Providers To Collectively Bargain With The State.

TO: CO- Chairman, The Hon. Edith Prague, Co-Chair, The Hon. Zeke Zalaski, Vice-Chair, The Hon. Edwin Gomes, Vice-Chair, The Hon. Ezequiel Santiago, Ranking Member, The Hon. Anthony Guglielmo, Ranking Member, The Hon. John Rigby, Member, The Hon. Bill Aman, Member, The Hon. Lou Esposito, Member, The Hon. Ernest Hewett, Member, The Hon. David Kiner, The Member, Craig Miner

I am the Business Manager and Co-founder of The Early Care & Education Training Institute, Inc. (an organization that provides training, support, consultation and mentoring for childcare providers and organizations, as well as the Executive Chairperson of the CT Family Day Care Associations Network, Inc. (CFDCAN). CFDCAN has not been called to act to pull the family child care (FCC) providers together in several years, but it has been called to action now to make certain that FCC providers get both sides of the story in order to make an educated decision. I am speaking out today on behalf CFDCAN and all the FCC providers who have contacted me to talk about the issues.

The first thing I'd like to say that it would be nice if once in a while the public hearings were scheduled in the evening so that more people providing the services affected by these bills would be able to attend. Or put up a web page that allows people to see the bill and directly respond either for or against and why including all their essential info – name, address, phone, email. I so wish I were able to stand in front of the committee to deliver my testimony.

To the issue at hand, I was a licensed family child care provider for 20 years before moving into the roles I play now. It was probably 20 years ago that some members of the Orange County (CA) FCC Association joined the Teamsters to be able to acquire affordable health insurance. The cost of union dues was very high and the providers did not want to pass on the cost to their clients because they would be in danger of losing them.

Since that time unions have been trying to convince family child care providers to unionize and the FCC providers have said a resoundingly "No!" They have said no for all the right reason. FCC providers have a political voice and they have exercised that voice personally and in groups, associations, on the local, state and national level for as long as I can remember.

The premise that providers need a new negotiating unit to deal with state regulations and programs is false. Providers worked cooperatively with DSS and then DPH to put regulations into effect that made sense for the children in their care. Often times each side agreed to disagree.

This time is different, not because providers are for unionizing but because the union, in this case the SEIU, has convinced many providers that they can fix things that are out of their realm of fixing and can deliver things that the legislature and the state's budget cannot deliver without harming the people they are supposed to be making this better for. And if this goes through it will be forced unionization because whether a provider chooses to opt in or out of union membership, that provider will have to live by whatever is worked out between the union and the state. Whether a provider opts in or out, the provider will pay fees either in the form of dues or simply service fees.

Most importantly, the action to try to unionize was not initiated by the FCC providers. This whole process has taken away a person's right to choose and is continuing to do so. It takes away their right to freely affiliate - to join or not whichever group they choose. It takes away their right to speak for themselves. It takes away their right to represent themselves. AND it's being done through actively passive aggression - union representatives calling several times, not leaving premises when asked, trying to get signatures without telling the person what they're signing, sending ballots to some and not others with no choice of opting for "I do not want to be part of a union", and never answering a direct questions with a quantified answer.

Executive Order #9 put in place by Governor Malloy, effectively said to all childcare providers, "I know what's best for you because you clearly are unable to speak for yourselves and unionizing will make things better for you and make childcare better." This raised bill - S.B. No. 352 "AN ACT CREATING A PROCESS FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS TO COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN WITH THE STATE" continues those insults to all of these entrepreneurs.

If this isn't stopped now it will continue on to other professions beyond "Certain Family Child Care Providers" and the "Personal Care Assistants" as well. Constitutional rights are being violated with this order, with this raised bill and I am greatly opposed to having constitutional rights violated and therefore opposed to this bill.

Respectfully,

Renee C. Gill
8 Spruce Drive
Sandy Hook, CT 06482
203.426.6816
reneegee@earthlink.net