



Connecticut
Early Childhood
Alliance

Testimony before the Labor and Public Employees Committee
Re: H.B. 5291 – An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage, Removing the Minimum Wage Tip Credit, and Increasing Penalties for Failure to Pay the Minimum Wage
Submitted by Maggie Adair, Executive Director
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The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance (Alliance) would like to thank Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee for the opportunity to testify. The Alliance is a statewide advocacy and membership organization committed to improving outcomes for all children, birth to age eight, in the areas of early learning, health, safety, and economic security.

The Alliance supports increasing and indexing the minimum wage as outlined in *H.B. 5291 – An Act Increasing the Minimum Wage, Removing the Minimum Wage Tip Credit, and Increasing Penalties for Failure to Pay the Minimum Wage*. This bill would raise Connecticut's minimum wage from the current rate of \$8.25 to \$9 per hour on July 1, 2012 and then to \$9.75 on July 1, 2013. Starting in July 2013, the minimum wage would be adjusted each year to keep pace with the rising cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index. Currently, 10 other states index the minimum wage.

Increasing the minimum wage will help move low-wage working families to greater economic security. At the current \$8.25 minimum wage, an individual earns just over \$17,000 working full time, far below what is needed to adequately support a family. Although Connecticut's minimum wage has been raised several times in the last decade, it has not kept pace with the actual cost of living. If the minimum wage had been indexed each year since 1968, the minimum wage would be \$10.55 in 2013.

Increasing the minimum wage would stimulate the economy. By increasing the wage to \$9.75 per hour, it is estimated that an additional \$71 million dollars would be infused into the state's economy. It would also increase the take-home pay for 226,000 workers by up to \$750 per year.

The majority of Alliance members provide early childhood services, including early care and education, family support, health, and nutrition, to children and families who are low-income and struggling to make ends meet. Research draws a direct correlation to a child's cognitive, health, and social development to income. An increase in the minimum wage would make a big difference in the lives of working parents and their children, particularly our youngest children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.