

Georgia Bell
43 Caya Ave, Apt. 204
West Hartford, CT 06110
(860) 241-8188

Labor and Public Employees Committee In Support of S.B. 352

I, Georgia Bell, would like to see a change in the Care4Kids program for the providers who take care of the kids, which is why I am submitting this testimony in support of S.B. 352. I've been providing for kids for about 15 years, I am currently an unlicensed provider in West Hartford. Right now I'm taking care of my two grandchildren, who are 3 and 6 years old.

When they get home from school, there is always a hot snack waiting for them. Once they've eaten, I help them with their homework. It's everything from math for Joseph, my 1st grader, to shapes, colors and numbers for Natasha. I spend 3 hours educating them each day, Monday through Friday. That's why I couldn't be at the public hearing for our bill, because I need to be here when they arrive from school. I regret not being able to be at the hearing. I know it's important for me to be there but my grandkids are more important.

The reason why I support having my union with other providers is so that we can work with Care4Kids to make changes. One reason to have a contract with our union is so that we can get our paychecks on time and maybe even get better pay and direct deposit. When I don't get my checks on time, I can't pay my bills on time. It's hard to concentrate on the kids when you're always worrying about your checks – is it going to get there on time so that I can pay my bills on time, without being late?

I am a professional childcare provider, not a babysitter. The subsidy checks I earn make it possible for me to pay my bills because I'm on a low-income budget. I deserve to be paid on time because I am a very good provider. I do this out of love for my grandchildren, but I still should get paid on time for the work I do. I've earned it and my grandchildren deserve my full time and attention. How else can they learn?

That's why we providers should have a voice through our union. We are the providers. We know what it takes to educate these children because it is what we do professionally. I've been with Care4Kids for 15 years, and I know what needs to change – and what needs to change now, not later.

Please support **S.B. 352**. Allowing us to form a contract with Care4Kids will help make improvements for all of us – providers, children and families.

Sincerely,
Georgia Bell, West Hartford