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

I am Glenda Medina. I have been a licensed childcare provider with Care4Kids for 10 years. I provide for five children in total. Four are through Care4Kids. The children that I care for are between 1 ½ and 3 years old. I would like to come to the hearing, but it is impossible given the hour that is set. My schedule is not fixed, and so I need to be here to take care of children and await their parents.

Our work as providers is to train children so that they go into pre-kindergarten prepared. This is different from being a babysitter because this is a profession that requires time, patience and the capacity to *educate* children. For example, every material in my daycare has an educational purpose: the instruments, the television, the toys, so that they can contribute to the futures of the children in my care. I also potty-train them, teach them the vocabulary they need to survive – they are small words and deeds because they are now babies, but they will become the men and women of tomorrow through what I teach them.

I am a professional childcare provider with many years of experience in educating children: ten with my license, and five before that through private pay. I and other providers should have a voice in our profession. Having a voice is the reason we formed our providers union – because, through being a united group, our collective voices can be heard. We have more power together with our union so that we can begin to negotiate with Care4Kids. It is very important for us to have the right to enter into a negotiation with the state – the ability to collectively bargain.

The most vital part of this process is ensuring access to health care, as it is very important for our work. We are in daily contact with the children in our care. If I get sick, for not having health insurance, I will no longer be able to provide more services for the community. If I close my daycare, parents will lose their jobs, children will lose the benefits of pre-kindergarten preparation, and I will lose my income.

Access to trainings is also *very* important. They help us grow and have more experience that will benefit the children we educate – and everything I do is for their benefit. I went to La Casa De Puerto Rico for trainings when they were open, but they are now closed. They provided services to us providers – for example nutrition classes, educational trainings, CPR and First Aid classes. We no longer have a central place where we can continue to professionally develop.