

March 13, 2012

Maria C. Nelson
399 Hitchcock Road
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Labor and Public Employees Committee
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

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

Good Afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Labor Committee:
My name is Maria Nelson. I have been a licensed childcare provider for 13 years. I am not in support of S. B. No 352.

I am a self employed person. I do not fit under traditional labor laws. I am not a political person. I voted for Governor Malloy and many others in my party. Unfortunately, they have let their constituents down by allowing this injustice to go on.

I am being forced to unionize. Anyone who tells you otherwise is not paying attention to what is going on or is only interested in political gain.

Last spring a union rep knocked on my door during snack time. When our meeting ended, she asked me to sign a card asking to learn more about the Union. I was open to hearing more, so I signed the card. I have since found out that this card is part of the card check system, They took advantage of me and mislead me about what I was signing.

When I found out the bill did not pass and in fact had died I was relieved. I had started hearing about the many states fighting this union and wanted no part of it.

In the fall, Governor Malloy signed Executive Order No. 9 over riding the decision our Legislature had made.

I believe that Legislature knew how the citizens felt about this issue, and allowed the bill to die. There is a group of providers in favor of unionization. I believe the actual number in this group has been inflated to reflect what they want you to think and not what is true.

There are 2,665 licensed childcare providers in this State. The Executive Order allowed for the Care 4 Kids Program List to be used for voting purposes. This list allowed 4,200 people to vote. If the Union is only looking to unionize licensed childcare providers who participate in the Care 4 Kids program, who are the other 2, 535 people who were allowed to vote. Why did they get to choose whether providers should unionize? Remember, "NOT" all licensed providers got a vote. If you were not currently receiving the subsidy you were excluded. I was a receiving the subsidy so I was eligible but did not receive a ballot. I went to the Capital on January 10th to go before the Working Group, a Union rep approached me and said I should have called for my ballot. Whom would I have called? There are still some providers who don't know they are unionized. How can that be in this day and age with computers, TV's and newspapers? It is because this issue was not properly publicized.

The Care 4 Kids program is for low income parents NOT childcare providers. Childcare Providers are the ones who are directly paid by the subsidy instead of the parent. This program is based on a parent's income. Why do I have to unionize and pay dues so that low income parents can get an increase in their subsidy? As for some providers only accepting the Care 4 Kids payments for the only fee for children they watch, I feel that is a business decision that they get to make as a self employed person. If they cannot survive on that payment alone, they should charge parent co-pay's like the Care 4 Kids certificate suggests. I sympathize with the hardship low income families and providers are having, but this is a tough economy for everyone. My business cannot afford to pay another bill. I have not raised my rates in 5 years. If this passes, I will be forced to do just that. This will not increase my profit, it will only be to pay the added expense of Union dues or fees. Everything has increased in price, groceries, art & craft supplies, gas and utilities. There is no extra money.

I have heard they will collective bargaining and give me a voice. I collective bargain with my own voice. I have a contract and handbook. I have paid vacations, holidays, and personal/ sick days. I attend monthly workshops and meetings. I am a member of the Early Childhood Collaboration of Southington, I am the Vice President of the Southington Daycare Providers Association and the Director of the Connecticut Childcare Providers Coalition. I am vested in my job and caring for children. I don't need someone else to teach me to do that. If the Union is allowed to collective bargain, providers like me, will be affected by the changes that they will make, but will not have a choice or a voice in their process.

Please, do not support this bill. Don't take my rights away. It was my choice to become a Childcare Provider, it should be my choice whether or not to Unionize. I choose NOT to unionize. **DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL!**

Maria C. Nelson