

March 13, 2012

To: Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

In Support of Raised Bill 352, An Act Creating A Process For Family Child Care Providers to Collectively Bargain With The State

My name is Noemi Vela and I live in Norwich. I am writing to ask you to support this bill for collective bargaining that the union has been working on, S.B. 352. It would help people like me who are exempt from needing a license but who provide child care so that the children's parents can go to work.

I raised seven children and I now take care of my three grandchildren. When I moved here four and a half years ago I was the only lady taking care of them full-time from 7:00 in the morning until the evening. I also care for them when my daughter and her husband have to work on Saturdays and Sundays. My daughter works at the Frito Lay factory and my son-in-law's job often requires that he work weekends too.

Last year I began to receive aid from Care4Kids. It took six months after we applied for the first payment to come. Often I do not get paid for all of the hours that I care for the children and I was denied the supplement for children with special needs. (My ten year old grandson has severe special needs and needs help feeding himself and using the toilet.)

I believe a collective bargaining law would help me improve my expectations from the Government. Many others, like me, could use more support from Care4Kids and having a Union would help. Another way it could help people like me is by helping us get access to the food program that is available for licensed daycare providers.

I hope you will support the bill. Thank-you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Noemi Vela
Norwich, CT