

March 13, 2012

To: Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee

Testimony 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 Yudyssa Fernandez. I live in Manchester and have been a licensed provider with Care4Kids for 3 years. I have 6 children in total. The oldest is 5 years old and the youngest is 8 months old. I provide care because I love children and I want to help parents so that they can hold down jobs.

I support forming a union and negotiating a contract with Care4Kids to improve the program. I have a family daycare now, and I would like to open a home based center, to provide for children. It is very hard for a person to start up a small business with so many regulations – I understand having regulations, but some, such as having a full-time nurse in my daycare, are excessive. A poor person cannot pay for a nurse. If Care4Kids allows us to have 6 full-time and 3-part time children with the responsibility of sending them home when they are very sick, I think that we, and one assistant should be able to have more children with the same responsibility. It would allow more unemployed parents to become employed who cannot afford private pay childcare on their own. We should be able to have 12 to 14 children if we have adequate space.

I have a degree in Administration from the Dominican Republic and professional experience as a childcare provider. I know how to educate and care for children through my business. That said, I would also like access to educational trainings where a professor or other specialist can teach us providers how to better teach the children we provide for. For instance, I care for a child who I believe has developmental learning disabilities. A class on how to help him learn would better position me to give him a specifically tailored education. Children learn differently, so classes in different educational techniques would improve the quality of care I can give. I'm a professional – if I were a babysitter, I wouldn't be educating the children in my care and preparing them for kindergarten.

We providers can make changes with a contract between our united providers union and Care4Kids. We should have a voice in our profession and should be able to represent and advocate for ourselves. Please vote yes for SB 352.

Yudyssa Fernandez  
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