



**Catholic Charities**  
*Archdiocese of Hartford*

February 14, 2013

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5782-  
An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for the Institute for the Hispanic Family.**

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone and esteemed members of the Commerce Committee, my name is Tiffany Murasso. I am the Director of Early Childhood & Family Center Programs at Catholic Charities, accompanied by Luisa Noujaim, the Director of the Institute for the Hispanic Family and I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 5782.

HB 5782 would provide necessary bonding funds for Catholic Charities to renovate the historic Frank and Katherine Secoll House located at 53 Wadsworth Street in Hartford for the purpose of expanding CC's Institute for the Hispanic Family (IHF), a community based center providing adult and children's mental health services; senior center programming; school readiness; fatherhood services; and intergenerational programs to support families and children in the community.

These comprehensive services address the needs of Hartford's Latino community by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to this high need population. Renovation of this building adjacent to the new IHF facility will strengthen the neighborhood, bringing additional services in this community. It will also improve overall neighborhood conditions including creating 12 to 15 jobs during the renovation and 5 new jobs for service delivery. The building will serve as a Therapeutic Preschool, offer parenting class and hold parent meetings' providing services to an additional 75 individuals per year.

Catholic Charities has been providing Early Care and Education services for almost 20 years and currently serves 344 children in 10 state licensed, accredited Early Childhood Education programs funded through the State Department of Education's School Readiness Initiative including 60 Latino children at the Institute for the Hispanic Family's School Readiness program.

The Therapeutic Preschool will:

- Provide full-time care with focus on the mental health and educational needs of young children with behavioral challenges that prevent them from functioning in traditional preschools.
- Serve children focusing on low income, Latino children and their families. This is a traditionally underserved population with many risk factors that contribute to children entering kindergarten not ready to learn.

This early intervention model supports the state's new Early Childhood Office by better coordinating services for young children and families, and will improve the child's likelihood of school success and reduce the likelihood that they will require long-term mental health services.

We thank Rep. Arce for proposing the bill and the committee for holding this public hearing. We ask for your support of HB 5782 and are available to answer any questions you may have.