



Greater Hartford Legal Aid

**Testimony Opposing S.B. 877,
An Act Concerning the Entrance Age for When a Child May Enter Kindergarten**

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc., Connecticut Legal Services, and New Haven Legal Assistance
Association
Education Committee
February 15, 2013

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished Members of the Education
Committee:

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc., Connecticut Legal Services, and New Haven Legal Assistance
Association provide civil legal services to Connecticut's low-income citizens, many of whom
work regularly but struggle to provide for their families. The children of these families are
particularly disadvantaged by chronic poverty.

Together, we therefore join Connecticut Voices for Children and others in strongly opposing
S.B. 877, which would move back the school entrance age for kindergarteners without providing
a clear plan for serving the thousands of children whose entrance into kindergarten, would be
delayed.

We will not repeat the testimony of Connecticut Voices for Children, but rather urge this
committee to consider the harsh economic effect this bill will have on Connecticut's poor
working families, in addition to the negative educational impact it will cause. Children from
low-income families are less likely to have access to high quality preschool and day care
programs than children from middle and upper class families. Day care can cost a working
parent over \$10,000 a year for each child who requires care while the parent works. Enjoying
tenuous economic security at best, our working clients can ill afford that added expense.
Moreover, subsidized day care slots are in critically short supply, serving but a small portion of
the families who need this help.

Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

999 Asylum Avenue, 3Fl. Hartford, CT 06105-2465 • Tel: 860. 541. 5000 • Fax: 860. 541.5050 • www.ghla.org

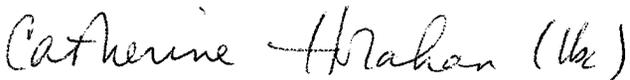


Considering the evidence that low-income children are less likely to be read to, less likely to live in a vocabulary rich environment, and less likely to have a high-quality preschool experience, low-income children are better off in school than out.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.


Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.


New Haven Legal Assistance, Inc.


Connecticut Legal Services