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BEFORE THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
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Good Morning Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Laura Cummings and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of Connecticut's businesses, and the vast majority of our members are small companies with fewer than 50 employees.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in **support of HB 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM**

HB 6359 Creates the Office of Early Childhood which will be responsible for (1) the delivery of services to children birth to five years of age; (2) coordinating the enhancement and implementation of the Early Childhood Information System; (3) developing and reporting on an early childhood accountability plan; (4) implementing a communications strategy for outreach to families, service providers and policymakers; and (5) beginning a state-wide evaluation of the educational progress of children from prekindergarten programs to grade four.

The goal of the OEC is to strengthen programming and teacher training as well as improve accessibility to early care and education programs. The OEC is charged with providing a comprehensive, collaborative system for delivering of these improved programs and services to children ages zero to five and their parents.

As preparation for high school graduation, college and ultimately the workforce begins in the earliest grades, CBIA has long been a champion of the improvement of Connecticut's public education system, including early education programs.

CBIA has long been a proponent of LEAN principles, and it is our hope that the OEC will assist the State to become more lean by completing its mission of reorganizing related programs that were once housed in five separate agencies under the OEC and hopefully improve the continuity and reach of early childhood programs.

For the aforementioned reasons, CBIA urges the committee to **support HB6359**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you regarding this important issue.

