

Dear Senators Stillman and Maynard,

I urge you to reject Senate Bill 877 and proposals to raise the kindergarten entrance age.

I am writing as an early childhood educator and school psychologist. Since 1965, I have been working with young children, first in Head Start, then Child Guidance Clinic (New London), private nursery schools, state funded day care and public schools. The issue of entry age for kindergarten is not a new one. Contrary to what some think, holding children back from entering kindergarten is rarely helpful. Children need to be in an encouraging learning environment from the beginning of their lives. Some families can provide this at home. Some families can find and afford more formal excellent early educational environments such as family or center based nursery schools or day care. But for many families, these opportunities do not exist either due to cost, or availability of high quality care. Delaying kindergarten entrance adds delay to an educational environment. You have received much information about the economic costs to parents when their children cannot enter school because the legal entry age had been raised. The National Association for the Education of Young Children has a position statement about this issue with regard to children's *educational success*:

***" Raising the legal entry age or voluntarily holding children back from kindergarten will not ensure that more children are ready for kindergarten. Little evidence exists that older children are more successful in kindergarten. Raising the entry age also leaves many children with no access to high-quality early education in the year before kindergarten. Hoping to promote kindergarten readiness, families may decide to hold a child out of school for a year; in general, holding children out of school has not been found to predict better social or academic outcomes."* Position Statement NAEYC 2009.**

Please do not support Senate Bill 877.

Thankyou.

Irene Weiss

17 Godfrey ST
Mystic, CT 06355
860-536-3926