



Testimony Opposing Governor's Bill HB 6824
Regarding any Elimination of Programs that Affect Children and Family Supports
Public Hearing for Early Childhood, Elementary & Secondary Education
Testimony by Marilyn Calderón, Executive Director
Connecticut Parent Power
Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am Marilyn Calderón, Executive Director of Connecticut Parent Power a statewide parent-led organization that engages, educates and mobilizes diverse parents from across the state to act on issues that matter most to them improving outcomes for all children in areas of early childhood, care, education, health care reform and K-12 school systems.

With direction from parent members across the state, CT Parent Power opposes the Governor's bill **HB-6824 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFORE AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE**, which would have a detrimental effect on the effective and efficient progress we have made with programs like Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), Help Me Grow, Fatherhood Initiative, Family School Connection and other family-centered programs. These parent/child centered programs are not just any programs, they are built upon a family friendly approach that lift the voices of children, youth and their families that do not have a voice or even feel hopeful enough to even try!

The aforementioned programs are programs of the parents/people and children/youth that are supported day in and day out to raise the our families with a two to three generational approach to cultivate the necessary global thinkers and global doers to apply stronger wraparound services and programs that build a strength-based structure where everyone wins...

CT Parent Power is requesting three pieces in being fully restored:

1. The elimination of Community Plans for Early Childhood, as this has been the glue to building sustainable early starts for all children in all spaces and places to get access to solid start with supports that included, but are not limited to, matched funding from philanthropic funding from the William Graustein Memorial Fund and many other public and private funding.
2. The elimination of Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), Help Me Grow, Fatherhood Initiative, Family School Connection and other family-centered programs that are simply the heart of all we do at the grassroots level to ensure that all voices are heard and actions of equality and access are modeled and executed for the greater good of our most precious, our youngest children and their families success!



3. Examining closely the disproportionately negative consequences for Latino children and families throughout Connecticut, whom are not receiving more ECS grant monies than calculated for their maximum ECS amount, as based on the most recently updated ECS calculations, we know that 50 towns are currently “overfunded” which negatively effects in total, receiving more ECS grant monies than calculated for their maximum ECS amount.

For example, a town does not have their ECS funding reduced even when their student enrollment has declined and the wealth of town residents has increased. If the current trend continues, overfunding will reach larger numbers annually in FY 2019. From FY 2009 to FY 2019, there will be a 10-year cumulative total of **\$228 million** in overfunding.

Therefore, we believe that the time is now, to correct the ECS overfunding because it is a challenging budget year. For overfunded towns, reduce ECS funding to their **maximum** amount and reallocate the overfunded \$21 million equally to bilingual education and special education as valuable investments , which are both gravely underfunded. Furthermore, this increased funding for bilingual education and special education will benefit all towns – even those that will lose their overfunded ECS monies.

As you know, we are in this difficult situation because of a lack of transparency for K-12 education spending. Therefore, Connecticut taxpayers will be appalled to learn that this level of misallocation of K-12 education funds is occurring. ECS overfunding will not go away if we just ignore it. This is our system that we have built over time that has neglected to fix the issues at hand, which clearly demonstrates how it will only get much worse if not dealt with.

We believe its time to stop playing politics and time to make tough decisions that equalize the playing field for all our children, youth and communities to have the accessible funding necessary to cultivate an educational stream lined approach that works for all...

CT Parent Power thanks each of you on the appropriations ahead of time for addressing this politically sensitive issue and encourages its members to eliminate permanently ECS overfunding in FY 16 and beyond, as we know that investing in the early years is key, but the continuum of remedying our achievement gap needs to be an effort that is equitable and equal for all invested.

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