



To: Senator Beth Bye, Co-Chair
Representative Toni E. Walker, Co-Chair
Senator Joan V. Hartley, Vice Chair
Representative Henry J. Genga, Vice Chair
Representative Robyn A. Porter, Vice Chair
Senator Robert J. Kane, Ranking Member
Representative Melissa H. Ziobron, Ranking Member
Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Darlene C. Ragozzine, Executive Director of the Connecticut Head Start Association

Date: March 3, 2015

Re: HB 6842 An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning General Government.

Dear Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 6842, An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning General Government.

Last year CT Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) programs serve approximately nearly 8,000 (actual was 7,837) children ages 0-5. The total base federal funding for HS/EHS combined is \$60,894,130. Our programs also receive funding through the state budget, which many of them rely on to meet their 20% local match for the federal funds.

The state funding has traditionally been offered through three (3) line items in the budget; **Head Start Services, Enhancements and Link**. These funds allow our programs to increase the number of preschool children that we serve, offer full day /full year and summer programs, increase program quality and offer programs that help close the achievement gap with a focus on evidenced based efforts and activities. This year's budget changes that by creating one line (1) item versus the three (3) and also **decreases the total amount by \$113,500**.

It is not clear to us how the merger of the three line items into one will impact the functions of each. We are concerned that there will no longer be funding for Enhancement or Early Childhood Link and that the funding may only be used to provide Head Start services through

the TANF formula that dates back to 1996 and that some of our programs are eliminated from receiving this funding .

In addition, the Governors' rescission bill **HB6825 cuts another \$267,458** from the Head start Enhancement and Link line items to balance FY 15. **This brings the total amount of cuts to Head Start through 2017 to \$380,958.**

WE applaud the Governor for supporting the **Early Head Start -Child Care Partnership by providing \$1,300,000 in state dollars to assure that families can receive both Care 4 Kids and the comprehensive services that Early Head Start offers.**

We would urge the committee to investigate the merger of the three (3) line items and to also restore the funding to last year's level, in order that Connecticut Head Start Programs may continue to increase and serve Connecticut's most needy families through quality programing.

Over the past fifty years Head Start has served more than 32 million children and their families. Studies have shown that these families have had stronger academic, health, and social outcomes because of Head Start. We must ensure that our programs in Connecticut have the resources to continue to do this in every community in our state.

Respectively Submitted,

Darlene C. Ragozzine

