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**Human Services Committee  
January 29, 2015  
Proposed House Bill 5357**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Naomi Mitchell, I am a child care provider and proud member of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of child care providers in our State. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 5357 – An Act Increasing Access to Child Care Subsidies for Working Families. While there are thankfully many thousands of children receiving child care through Care 4 Kids, the application process for this program is not for the faint of heart. Far too many families and child care providers are confused by the application process and the amount of paperwork involved.

I believe that family eligibility for the Care 4 Kids program should be presumptive if a family is already receiving HUSKY, a housing subsidy, SNAP or other public benefits. If a family has already gone through the approval process to receive these other benefits, they will most likely qualify for the Care 4 Kids program too. This would greatly cut down on paperwork and the time it takes to process an application.

Additionally, the Care 4 Kids program should be more transparent about how eligibility is determined, including how to determine if you meet the income requirements. This would greatly cut down on families who find a child care arrangement and begin work only to be told they are ineligible for the child care subsidy after their paper work is processed. It can take 2-3 months to determine whether a family qualifies for Care 4 Kids; In the meantime, a child care provider has received minimal payment from the low-income family in anticipation of receiving the Care 4 Kids subsidy, only to find out that they will never recoup those dollars. The child care arrangement is compromised as well as the parent's ability to continue working. Making it easier to determine ahead of time whether someone qualifies for the Care 4 Kids program would make both parents' and child care providers' lives easier.

We need to simplify and improve the cumbersome process for determining eligibility in the Care 4 Kids program. We recognize the state's interest in curbing fraud, but many of those safeguards have created a process that isn't working very well for families that need to get to work and providers that need to be paid for all of the time that a subsidized child is in their care.

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