To: HStestimony@cga.ct.gov
From: Betty Sugerman Weintraub
Associate Director for Community Initiatives, Liberty Bank Foundation
Re: Proposed H. B. 5823 An Act Implementing a State-Wide Coordinated Two-Generational Model

My name is Betty Sugerman Weintraub and I am the Associate Director for Community Initiatives with the Liberty Bank Foundation. I am writing, not only in my work capacity, but also as a member of the Two Generational Work Group. This multi-stakeholder group has been meeting every two weeks, for five months, through the coordination of the CT Commission on Children. We have studied the research on this issue and have heard presentations from experts in the fields of early childhood, workforce, adult and post-secondary education, housing, and primary and mental health.

The siloed approach of supporting families living in poverty by segmenting the needs of children and their parents does not address the reality that the families face in trying to move out of poverty and toward self-sufficiency. Low-income children continue to face a multiplicity of issues from below-average education outcomes, to poor health outcomes, as long as their parents toil in low-wage professions or are unemployed.

Beginning to address the parallel tracks of early childhood education and workforce preparedness in a combined, systematic, and intentional strategy will reflect the reality that the needs of both children and parents must move forward together, not separately. Strategic initiatives that may be a part of a Two Generational approach could include: home visitation, adult and post-secondary education, job/workforce training, early childhood and K-12 education.

Aligning state and federal policies and programs; setting up public-private partnerships; co-locating programs for children and parents; setting up a no-wrong-door approach that connects families to needed programs; all begin to address the need for a family centered approach to successful outcomes. This will also help to create efficiencies that potentially will save limited funds.

One core priority of the Liberty Bank Foundation is to support low-moderate income families with education that leads to their economic success. With that as a priority, it is easy to see why we strongly support the Two Generation approach to family self-sufficiency. Our foundation has noted over the years that programs that address the needs of both parents and children have better outcomes.

We believe that private philanthropy is well positioned to play a role in a public-private partnership to support Two Generational programming. This proved to be a successful model in supporting the creation and development of the Office of Early Childhood. As in that case, philanthropy can bring extensive knowledge, relationships, and experience to the table, along with dollars. Our foundation and many of our colleagues in philanthropy share a commitment to positive outcomes for families, and are eager to be involved in both the planning and execution of a Two Generation strategy for Connecticut.