



**Carmen Culbero  
Childcare Learning Centers, Inc.  
Before the Human Services Committee  
March 12, 2015**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercombie, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to communicate with you regarding my concerns related to the wages of early childhood professionals. My name is Carmen Culbero and I am the School Readiness Head Teacher at the Childcare Learning Centers, Inc. in Stamford, CT.

I am writing this testimony in support SB1044 AAC the Recoupment of State Costs Attributable to Low Wage Employers.

As you know, this bill would require large employers paying less than \$15 per hour to pay a fee to the state. The funds generated from this fee will be appropriated to the Department of Social Services and Development Services and the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). Currently this bill applies to low wage employers with 500 or more employees. We would request that the committee reduce this to employers with 250 employees.

It is imperative that the funds appropriated to the OEC be used to improve early childhood education in the state with an emphasis on raising the wages of early childhood teachers like myself.

This is an issue that is very important to me. I have worked at The Childcare Learning Center for sixteen years in a State Funded Program. I began my work as a Teacher's Assistant; then to Teacher; and finally Head Teacher. During this time I continued my education earning an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education. In addition, I raised one child. Due to my very low wages I was required to hold an additional job in order to make ends meet.

Currently, I continue to hold two jobs. I receive state assistance for housing and still struggle to provide for myself and my family. My salary places me in the lower bracket of the state median income, even though I continue to pursue higher education.

When I entered this field, I knew I would never be wealthy but I did expect to be able to provide a decent life for myself and my family. I fear that unless I can begin to earn a wage that is substantial enough to support my family, I will have to look towards another field of work. I do not want the situation to come to this.

The work I and my co-workers do every day is so important to the children we service and I might add important to the State of Connecticut as well. Children are our future and we should value them enough to insure that the teachers working with them are supported so that they can continue to do this important work.



CHILD CARE LEARNING CENTERS

I appreciate the attention you are giving towards this most important matter and I urge you to support me and those in my same position.  
Thank You!