

**Ellen Sklar**  
**Childcare Learning Centers, Inc.**  
**SUPPORT SB1044 AAC RECOUPMENT OF STATE COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS**  
**Before the Human Services Committee**  
**March 12, 2015**

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercombie, and members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Ellen Sklar; I am an Assistant Teacher at the Stamford School Readiness program 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 because my wages are too low for the job I do. I have been working at CLC for eight and a half years as an Assistant Teacher. I love my job and the children that I teach, but my wages are so low that I have to work at two other part-time jobs, and I work seven days a week. Even though I have been working here for eight and a half years, I only make \$14.41 an hour, or around \$27,000 a year.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts, a Master's degree in Elementary Education, and a Certificate in Early Childhood, which consists of 30 credits in Early Childhood. I thought that after I received the certificate that my salary would increase substantially, but it remained the same, with a few small raises of .40 or .50 cents an hour.

At this time the cost of living in Fairfield County, Connecticut continues to increase at a rapid rate. Even this year alone, my rent was increased \$80 a month, and I live in a so called "affordable housing program", and our medical insurance costs now include a \$2,500 deductible.

I am a 55 year old single woman, and I can't even afford to put any money away into the 401K program for my retirement, because I need every penny I make to pay my bills. I take home between \$790-\$800 every two weeks and that does not even cover the cost of my monthly rent.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.