

Testimony of Jenna Bereski

South Farms Nursery School, Preschool Teacher

Before the Human Services Committee

March 12, 2015, SB 1044

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

I am testifying on behalf of Senate Bill 1044, for higher wages:

"Choose a career you love and you will never work a day in your life!" Growing up, I had wanted nothing more than to become a teacher. After contemplating which area of study I would go into, I finally graduated Central Connecticut State University in 2013 with a Bachelors degree in Psychology. I always knew that I wanted to work with children so I immediately looked into employment in the child education field. Throughout my work experience in the past ten years, I have had the opportunity to work at after school programs and child care facilities in Middletown, Bridgeport, and Kensington. Most recently, I am proud to be employed as a preschool teacher at a NAEYC accredited and School Readiness funded preschool program in Middletown, Connecticut.

My experience in working with children and their families has clarified my decision in choosing to be a teacher, a mentor, and a role model. I go to work each day loving what I do. The best feeling in the world is knowing I am making an impact on a child's life. Although, I do not regret the route I chose with the education field, lately I have been looking into various job opportunities within other fields. Unfortunately, it has been difficult to maintain a life of content, living paycheck to paycheck due to limited income, student debt and other financial obligations. Considering my salary of \$13.00 per hour, money taken out for taxes, and deduction for insurance, my net salary provides me with restricted opportunities. Due to this situation, I have begun to explore my different options, one being to further my education. This decision has been a recent debate of mine because of the issue of how I will afford to pay for graduate school when I am now just getting by financially. I continue to weigh my options each day, knowing what a difference I can make in a young child's progress, development, and learning experience.

Unfortunately, my passion in working with children has caused a daily struggle in maintaining a stable lifestyle! I aspire to be of importance in children's education and learning. I wish to see an increase in budgeting, funding, and more resources available for early childhood. Most importantly, my hope is that the early education field will get the proper recognition in the significance it has on early learner's lives.

Thank you for your time,

*Jenna Bereski*

South Farms Nursery School  
Middletown, CT 06457  
860-344-1179