

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: SB 1044

Prepared by Sue C. Tenorio, Ed. D.
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This is to submit my support for **SB 1044: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOUPMENT OF STATE COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS**. Simply stated, the purpose of **SB 1044** is to require employers that pay *low wages*---meager wages that cause their employees to rely on public assistance---to contribute to state costs for programs/services utilized by low wage employees.

Even as our State continues its slow but certain economic recovery, some of our largest employers in CT. have been reaping record profits. Their profits, in no small part, are due to the *low wages* the same employers pay their workers. In turn, *low wage* workers turn to state public assistance programs and services--- Care 4 Kids, food stamps, WIC, Section 8, HUSKY Health---in order to make ends meet.

It is no secret that in the field of Early Childhood, for years the individuals who staff early care and education programs---whether Head Start, child care centers, or preschool programs---are poorly paid, *low wage workers*. These are the same individuals who frequently work long hours, struggle to find their own child care and continue to complete professional development requirements in order to keep their *low wage* jobs.

What's wrong with this picture? It's not only unfair, it doesn't make economic sense.

At a critical point when the State is scrambling to address a budget "sink hole", **SB 1044** identifies a means to replenish State monies: collect a designated portion of the huge corporate profits and use the resulting funds to support two major State services that are mainstays of *low wage workers*: Medicaid and Child Care.

In addition, **SB 1044** proposes the establishment of a state-level Board representing low wage workers, large and small business organizations, Medicaid and State child care programs, and organized labor to further study AND monitor the causes and effects of large businesses paying *low wages* to State residents as well as the impact of such practices upon the need for public assistance by *low wage workers*.

In addition, **SB 1044** seeks to support communication between CT. residents who receive or provide public assistance, employers and state agencies/officials in order to:

- improve policies and procedures related to public assistance usage among *low wage workers*
- improve the quality of public assistance programs
- realize the impact of public assistance programs on workforce quality and stability

Your support of **SB1044** is important. Thank you.