

Testimony of Susan Slater
Before the Human Services Committee
SUPPORT SB1044 AAC RECOUPMENT OF STATE COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO LOW WAGE EMPLOYERS
March 12, 2015

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

My name is Susan Slater, and I am a teacher at Childcare Learning Center-William Pitt CDC.

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.

Wages for early childhood teachers is an issue that is very important to me and to many of my fellow co-workers, all of whom are dedicated educators that have devoted their professional lives to the betterment of children.

Simply stated, I love working as a preschool teacher at CLC. It remains a very fulfilling calling that I trust will hold my interest for years to come. It is truly a rewarding career. However, it is exceedingly difficult to make ends meet on the wages provided by CLC.

We are paid at a much lower rate than other school teachers, despite the fact that we devote more hours. We work a full day, and we do not have the luxury of "work-free" lives during the summer months.

Very often, in fact, our work day does not end when we leave for the day. Lesson plans, children's profiles (progress reports) and preparations for "read alouds" comprise just a portion of the "homework" we happily complete to meet preschool standards and daily requirements.

Often, we use our own funds to purchase decorations and other items for the classroom in an effort to afford students the most fulfilling learning experience possible. The teachers at CLC put their collective heart and soul into their job because they enjoy working with the children and their families. The teachers are also well-educated and have worked diligently to qualify for these positions. CLC hires only highly-trained teachers, and therefore I believe it is imperative that the educators be compensated in a commensurate way. Inevitably, it will be difficult to keep qualified teachers at CLC if the wages remain subpar. Ultimately, such an unfortunate situation would adversely affect the children and their education during such important periods in their lives.

For these reasons we are asking that you consider passing this bill that would provide the teachers at CLC with fair wages.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Your consideration is genuinely appreciated.