

Testimony of Trisha Harris

Phelps Ingersoll Center for Children N. Middlesex YMCA, 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:

I knew early in my educational career I wanted to be a teacher. I attended Manhattanville College in Purchase, NY for its highly recognized program for education as an NCATE accredited higher education institution. I enrolled in the five year Masters teaching program, completing my dual degree MAT ages birth to sixth grade in the fall of 2005. I was lucky to obtain a preschool teaching position in February of 2006 with the age I truly came to love after student teaching. The position was in a NAEYC accredited and School Readiness funded preschool at the Northern Middlesex YMCA in Middletown, CT.

At the time I was commuting an hour from Pomfret, CT where I live residing with my parents as I could not afford a place of my own. After a year and a half I had to make the difficult decision to leave the position I loved to find a job closer to home in order to better fulfill my financial obligations. I then returned to the YMCA program in 2009 when a teaching position was offered to me. It was a difficult decision financially, however I truly loved the school and I wanted to go to a job that I loved every day. A job where I feel every day I make a substantial impact on my students' and their education. In addition, I have strong relationships with the children and families and this is why they stay, send all of their children, and refer families to the program.

I truly do not want to leave the field of early childhood education, however ever month it becomes more and more stressful not knowing if I will be able to get from paycheck to paycheck. So as I look to my future what I would like to do in my life such as travel, the chance the chance to purchase a home of my own, perhaps start a family or to finally pay off some of my college loan debt, I know as it stands now I will most likely have to look at other career options.

My wish is to see for all of us who love teaching in the early childhood field, an increase in budgeting, wages, funding and more resources. I know for all of us we really want to see recognition of the significance of the work we do with children, and the impact it has on their lives and future education.

Thank you,

*Trisha Harris*

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