

Senator Dante Bartolomeo
Representative Diana Urban
Committee on Children
State Capitol Building, Room 011
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Bartolomeo,

The United Way of Greater Waterbury supports the passage of SB 209 – An Act Concerning Funding for the Reach Out and Read Program. The proposed funding supports promoting early literacy and school readiness in preschool-age children – a goal shared by this United Way and many others in the state and local communities. Reach Out and Read is a proven model that effectively utilizes pediatricians to deliver the message that parents are their children’s first teacher. In that trusted patient-doctor relationship, families are exposed to simple ways they can have a profound effect on the development of their children and help them reach developmental milestones. This approach is an opportunity to advance a collective agenda in all segments of a child’s life.

United Way endorses the Reach Out and Read model because:

- This is a public/private partnership where public dollars will be matched by private dollars. United Way of Greater Waterbury has invested funding in this program locally over the past 2 years and is now supporting 3, soon to be 4 practices.
- It is an evidence-based program that aligns with the State of Connecticut’s Kids Report Card.
- It is extremely cost effective and cost efficient and our program is scalable.
- It is the only statewide program that uses doctors to foster early literacy and oral language development right in the exam room.

The AAP cited only Reach Out and Read as a best practice program for book distribution and development of oral language and early literacy skills in the pediatric exam room in their 2014 policy statement, “Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice.”

Please pass this bill and make Reach Out and Read a standard best practice in Connecticut. Help Connecticut children be ready for school!

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