



## ALL OUR KIN INC

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN

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**Testimony Regarding HB 6825**  
**Christina Nelson, Early Childhood Policy Fellow, All Our Kin**  
**Before the Appropriations Committee**  
**April 21, 2015**

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Christina Nelson, and I am a Policy Fellow at All Our Kin. I'm here to testify regarding HB No. 6825, AN ACT MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS AND ADDRESSING THE DEFICIT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015. Governor Malloy's most recent round of rescissions, announced on April 1, 2015, cut \$5,835,882 from Care 4 Kids, Connecticut's child care subsidy program, and I would like to take this chance to urge the Committee to reinstate full funding to Care 4 Kids.

All Our Kin is a nationally-recognized, Connecticut-based nonprofit that trains and supports family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. Seventy-two percent of the children in our providers' care qualify for Care 4 Kids subsidies. Given that the average annual cost of full-time child care for an infant in Connecticut is \$13,241, or 43.3% of the income of the average single mother in Connecticut, we have seen how critical Care 4 Kids has been as a workforce support for parents, who without access to stable child care would be unable to enter the workforce.

We are disappointed that the funds for the Care 4 Kids program did not go fully expended last year, particularly because we have encountered so many parents who could have desperately used assistance in paying for child care but were unable to access the program. Some of these parents and caregivers had been receiving Care 4 Kids, but when their family income increased to just over 50% of the State Median Income, they were faced with an eligibility cliff and lost their benefits. Other families had their applications denied because their paperwork hadn't been received. One of our staff members recently talked to a young mother who had found a full-time job and a quality family child care program. She applied for Care 4 Kids but was told that her faxed documents had not been received. She sent the documents again and waited, but again, she was told that her application was not complete. Eventually, she had sent her documents four times over multiple months. Meanwhile, her family's progress had been stymied. All that time, she had been scrambling to make ends meet. The process, with its delays and waiting and re-sending and calling, was so draining that she felt hopeless and disenfranchised. Her Care 4 Kids application was approved, but the months and months of delays had caused both financial and emotional stress.

We have heard so many stories like this one. The fact that there were \$5 million dollars in unspent funds last year does not mean that there weren't Connecticut families who could have used Care 4 Kids. It means that barriers to access should be removed so that parents can go to work and children can thrive

in stable, reliable child care arrangements. Re-opening Priority Group 6 (families receiving Care 4 Kids whose income increases to between 50% and 75% of the State Median Income) is one critical step that will allow low-income families to rise into the middle class and achieve stability. Extending the redetermination period from eight months to twelve months (in accordance with the new CCDBG regulations) is a second step. Establishing annual redetermination will benefit families, and it will also reduce administrative burdens and make the program as a whole more efficient.

We strongly urge the Committee to restore Care 4 Kids funding to its full amount. Care 4 Kids is a lifeline for working families, and to cut it places a heavy and unfair burden on the children and families who need it most.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.