

Testimony of Dana Binette
Community Children's Center
Before the Education Committee
Hearing on Low Wage Worker Proposal
Senate Bill 7020
March 19, 2015

Legislators and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Dana Binette. I am a teacher at the Community Children's Center in Mansfield. I am testifying about wages for early childhood educators. This issue is very important to me and I would like the legislators to address the issue of low wages now rather than next year as the bill proposes.

I have a bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Connecticut and have been a teacher for over 25 years. I have the education, many years of experience and I recently won a national teacher award, yet I only make \$13.13 per hour. I am fortunate enough to have a husband that can support me because with my low salary I would not be able to live on my own. I live in a modest home in Willington and to put it in perspective it would take me approximately 6 weeks at my current salary to be able to make one mortgage payment.

I have worked with a great deal of outstanding teachers throughout my career however many of them chose to leave the early childhood education field due to the low wages. I have also worked with many young girls working as teacher aides who really enjoyed working with young children. My daughter was also a teacher aide in a childcare center. When I asked my daughter and the other young girls I worked with their plans for the future very few said they were going study early childhood education. They told me they really enjoyed working with young children but they did not want to invest the time and money on a degree in early childhood education if they would not be able to live on the salary of an early childhood teacher.

Many teachers are in this field because they truly love working with young children but their love for the job does not pay the bills. If we want to keep the qualified, talented teachers in the classroom and attract future early childhood teachers we need to offer them worthy wages so we can provide children with the best education possible.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.