



REQUEST OF SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 7020
An Act Concerning Early Childhood Educators and Initiatives

Testimony of Karen Brennan, Director
on behalf of the Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative
March 13, 2015

Members of the Education Committee,

On behalf of the Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative (SECC), we are requesting your support of House Bill 7020. As you may know the Governor's budget eliminates Local Community Plans. Stamford currently receives \$25,000 as a public/private grant, with an additional \$10,000 from the United Way of Western Connecticut. While our funding may seem small, the SECC makes a large impact in Stamford.

The SECC is a community partnership in Stamford of over 40 organizations committed to improving the quality of life for all children. Our mission is to prepare all children birth through age eight for a lifetime of learning by engaging families, fostering community, and advocating for resources and results.

Governor Malloy created the Office of Early Childhood to provide a comprehensive approach for the delivery of services to children and their parents. The SECC is Stamford's early childhood office and strives to provide a system of integrated support that our children need to achieve basic skills for success—now and for a lifetime. To do this, the SECC mobilizes parents, community-based organizations, child care providers, health professionals, local businesses, city government, and the Stamford Public Schools to develop community-decided strategies and to empower partner organizations in their implementation of these strategies.

The SECC is the first step in Stamford's larger Cradle to Career (C2C) vision for every child. Currently, the United Way of Western Connecticut's C2C Project Manager is working to bring the STRIVE Cradle to Career model to Stamford. The SECC, focusing on children birth to age 8, will be an instrumental part of the C2C efforts.

This bill would keep local early childhood partnerships like the SECC in the budget as the line item Local Community Plans by honoring a generous offer from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund's match of \$750,000.

Please consider supporting HB 7020. Stamford's constituent families of children birth to 8 need to stay connected to supports to help their children be ready for kindergarten annually, which in turn creates a positive impact on narrowing CT's achievement gap.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.