



**Testimony Regarding S.B. 1135: An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for  
Maintaining the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue  
Volatility on the State Budget**  
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee  
April 23, 2015

**Board of Directors**

Yvette Meléndez, Chair  
Bonnie J. Malley, Vice Chair  
Robert B. Goldfarb, Treasurer  
Nancy P. Bernstein  
David M. Borden  
Thea Montañez  
Rodney O. Powell  
JoAnn H. Price  
Theodore S. Sergi

**President**

Linda J. Kelly

Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and members of the Committee:

**The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving** is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region with the mission to create lasting solutions that result in vibrant communities within our region. In 2014, the Foundation awarded \$32.5 million in grants to a broad range of nonprofit organizations, including \$9.4 million to support education and more than \$7.3 million to support programs that promote the conditions for educational and life success of the children and their families in our region. **Our significant investments, experience and partnerships confirm that achieving educational success for our children requires a sustained budgetary commitment to:**

- **Practice and policy that help children grow in thriving families and communities;**
- **Equitable access to high-quality, coordinated and holistic supports that begin at birth and continue through high school graduation;**
- **Programs that create and sustain conditions for family, community and school partnerships.**

**The Hartford Foundation supports the conversation generated by S.B. 1135 to explore options that allow Connecticut to build a high-quality, coordinated early childhood system and support K-12 schools, ensuring that every child enters kindergarten ready to learn and graduates from high school prepared to succeed.**

The Governor's proposed budget cuts nearly \$600 million from programs critical to families across the state including:

- \$49.3 million from the HUSKY health insurance program for children, families, and pregnant women;
- \$11.3 million from the Office of Early Childhood; and
- \$158.0 million from the State Department of Education.

In the metro Hartford region, these cuts impact:

- Over 100,000 pregnant women and parents enrolled in HUSKY A;
- About 75,000 children under age six; and
- Over 47,000 students attending eight Alliance District schools.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CT Voices for Children, *How will proposed budget cuts to children impact your town?* (April 2015); 2013 Census Data and Alliance District 2014-2015 capacity grant applications to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

**The cuts disproportionately impact the most vulnerable children and families.** The proposed eliminated programs target children and families who are low-income, under-resourced and most in need of the financial and program supports including **HUSKY health insurance, Help Me Grow, local early childhood collaboratives, extended learning, Parent Leadership Training Institute and human service infrastructure funding.** Several of these programs were seeded by Hartford Foundation investments and have grown to become statewide and nationally recognized models of impact and sustainability for children's healthy development and educational readiness and success. Continued support is also needed to ensure that **children in the lowest performing school districts** have equitable access to an array of high-quality developmental and educational supports both inside and outside school. In Hartford, where 11% of all of **Connecticut's English Learners** attend school, state investments must support policies and practice that help these students progress academically and engage their families in the English language learning process.

**The cuts are shortsighted.** Failing to invest now in preventative programs and services means we will pay later. We urge you to consider the presentations at today's hearing by Connecticut Voices for Children and others which thoughtfully explore revenue options to maintain critical support to our children and families.

**Connecticut must make wise choices.** The difficult financial climate requires actions that minimize the immediate and the long-term harm to our greatest state resource – our children. **A healthy early start and high-quality education from pre-k through high school must remain a top budgetary and policy priority to ensure opportunity for all our children and to achieve prosperity for our State.**

Thank you.

Contact

Elysa Gordon, Senior Officer, Public Policy and Early Childhood  
[egordon@hfpg.org](mailto:egordon@hfpg.org)