



Testimony in Support of H.B. 5823: An Act Implementing A State-Wide Coordinated
Two-Generational Model

Richard Sussman, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Human Services Committee
February 5, 2015

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

Good morning, Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Distinguished Members
of the Human Services Committee,

President
Linda J. Kelly

My name is Richard Sussman and I am testifying today on behalf of the Hartford
Foundation for Public Giving, the community foundation for the 29-town greater
Hartford region with the mission to put philanthropy into action to create lasting solutions
that result in vibrant communities within our region. I am also a member of the statewide Two-
Generational Policy Workgroup.

**The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Supports H.B. 5823: An Act Implementing A State-
Wide Coordinated Two-Generational Model**, with modification as explained below. The bill requires
the Commissioner of Social Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor, to create pilot
two-generational model programs that promote long-term economic success for low-income families.

**Two-generation models recognize that the well-being and life success of parents and children are
interdependent.** For more than two decades, the Foundation has invested significantly in programs that
promote a whole family approach, demonstrating that **children thrive in thriving families.** Our new
strategic work builds upon this deep knowledge and experience. We seek to advance systemic solutions
and partnerships, including collaboration with the public sector, which address the root causes of the
educational inequities facing the children and their families in our region and ensure that these children,
especially those most disadvantaged, are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten and prepared to
succeed when they graduate from high school. Through our previous and current work we have learned
that there is a need to increase shared planning, coordination and funding within and across the
systems responsible for learning, health, family support and workforce readiness. We believe this
holistic, systems-oriented approach will create an enduring impact on our region's families today – as
well as the generations that follow.

**New strategies are needed to achieve the promise of the two-generation approach for large numbers
of children and their families.** The Hartford Foundation has seeded several successful two-generation
programs including Child First, the Nurturing Families Network and Help Me Grow. These investments,
many which now receive state funded support, improved children's cognitive and socio-emotional skills,
increased parenting skills and the ability of parents to meet their child's basic needs and decreased child
abuse and neglect. The Hartford Foundation also was instrumental in the creation of Hartford Community
Schools that integrate early childhood learning, parent education and family support services at the
school, system and policy levels. In addition, we made a major investment in improving adult literacy in
the region.¹ This included investments and public-private partnerships to support contextualized learning,
the concept of teaching literacy skills as they apply to the job demands of a particular industry, as an
effective strategy to accelerate a student's path from education to employment.

**Going forward, philanthropy and the public sector must learn from our current
investments in children and families to create a new Connecticut framework that**

10 Columbus Boulevard, 8th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

¹OECD (2013), *Time for the U.S. to Reskill?: What the Survey of Adult Skills Says*, OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264204904-en>

addresses the intergenerational barriers to educational and economic success. To this end, the Hartford Foundation supports this bill as a critical first step and suggests the following changes:

- **The bill should be amended to include other state agencies with responsibility and funding streams related to the educational and economic success of children and families such as the Office of Early Childhood and the Departments of Housing and Education.**
- **The legislation should reference the best practices and recommendations for system change for two-generational plans highlighted in the report by the Two-Generational Policy Workgroup created under Public Act 14-217 adopted by the 2014 Connecticut General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Dannel Malloy. The pilot two-generational models should be required to demonstrate alignment and impact related to the national and state research and policy recommendations in this report.**
- **The bill should be amended to require ongoing work by the Two-Generational Policy Workgroup to create a learning community to identify lessons from the pilot models, work occurring in other states, examples of related public-private partnerships and cross-sector strategies statewide and by national funders and workgroups such as the National Governors Association and the Aspen Institute.**
- **The legislation should be changed to not only provide data on the efficacy of the program for children and adults, but on systems change that enables two-generational models to develop and endure such as cross sector two-generational professional development and redesigned or new infrastructure (policy, funding and staff) that support connections between programs.**
- **The legislation should require that data on adults and children should reflect data on the communities where children and families live, not just where they participate in programs or attend school. Where available, this can provide an analysis of the interrelatedness of child and parent outcomes.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.