

February 23, 2016

RE: Bill 5306 An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood

Representative Fleischman, Senator Slossberg and members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Thompson, and I am the Executive Director of Interfaith Early Learning Center in Danbury. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our program. We request that you reject the language change in bill 5306, related to the regional accreditation projects (AFP) in Section 6 (see below):

Sec. 6. Section 17b-749e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2016*):

The Office of Early Childhood shall, **[establish and fund five regional accreditation projects, within available appropriations. The office shall select qualified applicants for each region through a request for proposal process. The office shall give priority to child day care facilities where at least twenty per cent of the children live with families earning less than seventy-five per cent of the state median income level]** within available appropriations, support programs providing child care services to achieve accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The office shall set priorities for receipt of support under this section.

We ask that you allow the current, highly regarded and nationally recognized, high quality AFP support system to remain as a regional entity and that you do not make this another single entity state initiative. Being in the western part of CT, we appreciate the local contact and the regional trainings. My center was supported as we were part of the AFP 3different times as we were pursuing our reaccreditation. With their assistance we were reaccredited every time. The assistance in understanding the requirements for reaccreditation as well as the changes made by NAEYC was invaluable. My staff and I attend the trainings for teachers and directors and have found them to be extremely useful. The AFP consultants spend much time really getting to know our programs and are always available to help us in any way they can. The fact that we have someone readily available to us is wonderful. Even after we achieve our reaccreditation they are still there to help. Please consider this request when making your decision on Bill 5306.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Thompson

Interfaith ELC

