

RE: Raised Bill No. 112 AN ACT PROVIDING CHILD CARE FOR ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS ENROLLED IN APPROVED HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Dear Senator Slossberg and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee:

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) is a coalition of organizations, parents, and other concerned individuals committed to improving the well-being of Bridgeport's children and families through research, education, advocacy, and mobilization. BCAC provides the vehicle for the Greater Bridgeport community to take concerted action on issues that affect children's health, education and safety. Together, we advocate for policy and systems change that will clear a path to a better future, particularly for Bridgeport's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Raised Bill No. 112 does just that!

On behalf of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, we wholeheartedly support the Office of Early Childhood in establishing and operating a child care subsidy program to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care services for families with a parent or caretaker attending a two or four-year college or university in pursuit of a degree to increase employability.

Research shows that high-quality family child care programs give our youngest and most vulnerable children the quality learning experiences they so desperately need and deserve. We know that early experiences lay the groundwork for all learning, behavior and health and shape our children's futures.

All our families want the very best for their children and getting access to quality and affordable child care brings with it so many challenges.

In meeting with one of our Parent Aide's in the Bridgeport Public School District, she talked about the incredible value of Care4Kids. One of her Mom's didn't have family supports, found herself pregnant and living with her boyfriend. She was able to access the resources needed like Care4Kids to stay in school. She couldn't afford childcare without any income and this enabled her to focus on school during the day and care for her newborn at night. This young Mom was able to stay in school, become a member of the National Honor Society, and is on track to graduate from high school. This was a life changer!

Raised Bill No. 112 could afford this young Mom to continue her education and increase her opportunities for gainful employment; an opportunity for improving her economic status through education for herself and her child.

We urge you to support this very important measure that will ensure better opportunities for children and their families. Thank you for your time and your commitment.