STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

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Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Testimony of Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D., Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood
Before the Human Services Committee
Re: SB 17 – An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services
Thursday, February 18, 2016

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. I am Myra Jones-Taylor, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify before this committee in support of Section 33 in Senate Bill 17 – An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services.

Section 33 would repeal an obsolete statute, Section 17b-277b, regarding the Healthy Start program. The Department of Social Services examined the rules and regulations within Medicaid policy and determined that the Healthy Start program is not eligible for federal reimbursement under Medicaid.

The Governor's proposed budget transfers the Healthy Start program from the Department of Social Services to the Office of Early Childhood. In FY14, programs associated with the Children's Trust Fund were transferred from the Department of Social Services to the Office of Early Childhood, with the exception of Healthy Start. Since then, Healthy Start has been transferred to the Office of Early Childhood through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The Governor's proposal will eliminate the time-consuming process of administering an MOA.

Healthy Start, funded at $1,224,704, is a program for pregnant women with incomes up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, which supports positive maternal and neonatal health outcomes. Core Healthy Start services include: a comprehensive medical and pyscho-social risk assessment; the development of a care plan; and the delivery of care coordination including health education and case management services. Healthy Start services continue postpartum through the second year of a child's life.

Healthy Start is operated through five contactors: New Haven Health Department, United Community and Family Services, City of Bridgeport Social Services, Staywell Healthy Center, and the City of Hartford Health and Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I respectfully request that you take favorable action on this bill. I am here to listen to your thoughts and answer any questions.

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