

Testimony Submitted by State Funded Child Development Centers Director's Forum
Labor and Public Employees Committee

March 8, 2016

Support: SB 391, An Act Concerning the Recoupment of State Costs Attributable to Low Wage Employers

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and Members of the Committee

My name is Edie Reichard and I am writing this testimony in support of SB 391, AAC the Recoupment of State Costs Attributable to Low Wage Employers, that would create a low wage employer fee on Connecticut's largest low wage employers to recoup state subsidies to workers for child care and health care costs. I am writing this on behalf of the 102 State Funded Child Development Centers that serve over 4000 children annually from low and moderate income families.

I am the Director of Sleeping Giant Day Care in Hamden. I have been in the early care and education field for many years and know firsthand that many of our teachers, even teachers with an Associate or Bachelor Degree start out in the field without making \$15 dollars an hour. The children and families we serve have incomes that are 50% of the state medium income and most pay almost 28% of their income on child care. Child care is essential to working families and a critical infrastructure for our economy.

We believe the bill before you will bring in a revenue stream to address the chronic underfunding of child care and health care, especially home health care. This bill aligns with HB 5370, "AA Increasing the Minimum Wage" and HB 5557, "AAC the Recruitment and Retention of Early Childhood Professionals." Both bills recognize that Connecticut working families are struggling to make ends meet. The United Way's ALICE report states that over 58% of families in CT live at or just above the poverty level. Connecticut cannot maintain a high quality of life with so many families working in low wage jobs.

Low income working families did not create the budget crisis facing Connecticut. The bill before you would direct fees from highly profitable corporations to the CT Low Wage Employer Advisory Board to make recommendations on how the state can best use the fee to expand or improve child care and healthcare. We ask that the bill be amended to direct a portion of the funds to be used to increase the wages of teachers and workers in the child care and home health care professions. For years we have heard it's not the right time, but we say now is the right time and urge you to act and vote yes on SB 391.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in your deliberations.

Respectfully,

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