



February 15, 2016

Testimony on SB 10: Commission on Children Hearing

Homeless families face so many barriers. Imagine not being able to provide your children a stable home environment. They are trying to keep their families together under the most challenging circumstances, moving from place to place, lacking an adequate income, dependent on temporary shelter, and other transient situations and complex circumstances. Each problem compounds the other and a homeless parent can easily feel trapped in an endless and dead-end cycle.

We are fortunate in this state to have the Care4Kids program, which provides assistance with childcare costs for low-income families. This assistance can make the difference between being able to go to work or not, easing the burden low-income parents face when working to become more self-sufficient.

But for families in shelter, the requirement that the parent be employed in order to access this assistance creates yet another barrier. How can these parents, primarily young moms with young kids, look for work when they have no one to watch their children? They are trapped in a situation where they need job training or are in the job search process, but without safe daycare, they have no way to proceed.

After discussions with the Office of Early Childhood, our governor has proposed a bill that would allow homeless families to receive this child care subsidy regardless of their work status. It allows a parent to access this support so that they can attend job training or revive their job search, confident that their children are in a safe environment. This is a very important step in helping those who are already struggling with near impossible challenges begin to proactively make the changes necessary to stabilize their lives.

We see, first hand, the struggles these families face and know that assistance like this is critical to halt the cycle of poverty, homelessness and despair and replace it with income, stable housing and confidence. Please support this important bill, SB 10, that will allow our most vulnerable families the ability to conquer their challenging past and move towards a more productive and secure future for themselves and their children.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carla Miklos

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