

**Testimony Supporting Governor's Bill 10:
An Act Increasing Access to Childcare for Children Who Are Homeless**

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Committee on Children

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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Rachel Leventhal-Weiner and I am the Education Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

At Connecticut Voices for Children, our fundamental belief is that *all* children, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, class, ability, or geography, must have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. **For this reason, I am here to today to support Governor's Bill 10: An Act Increasing Access to Childcare for Children who are Homeless.**

Access to high quality early care and education is extremely important for all children, but especially for children in vulnerable circumstances. We consider homeless children to be among the most vulnerable and we applaud the Governor and the Office of Early Childhood for creating a protected category that gives homeless families direct access to childcare subsidies. With over 2,000 homeless children in our state, we must do everything we can to provide them with secure and stable housing. While daytime childcare is not the same as a permanent home, it is a start.

We recognize the daily challenges homeless families face and believe that removing barriers to supportive services is necessary. **We offer an amendment to the language in Section 2(e) and 3(h).** Families typically have 30 days to submit up-to-date health records for their children, including immunization records, and the language in Sections 2e and 3h would extend this time frame to 90 days. The extended time frame will be helpful to many families experiencing homelessness who have up-to-date vaccination records and need extra time to provide those records to their childcare provider. However, for families whose children are not current with the recommended vaccination schedule, we suggest that the language in the bill state specifically that schools, childcare centers and family child care programs providing childcare as defined in this bill assist families experiencing homelessness with updating vaccination records in a timely manner. Considering that the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness has reported that 9 out of 10 homeless children in Connecticut are under the age of twelve, this is a critical time in terms of health for all children. To that end, we include our suggested revisions on the following page.

We reiterate our support for Governor's Bill 10 and appreciate your time this morning. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

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Suggested revisions to statutory language in Governor's Bill 10:

We offer our suggested revisions to the statutory language in **bold** below.

Sec. 2e of Bill No. 10 should be amended to read as follows

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (B) of subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 19a-79-5a of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies relating to physical examination requirements and subsection (e) of section 19a-79-6a of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies relating to immunization requirements, homeless children and youths, as defined in 42 USC 11434a, as amended from time to time, may be allowed to attend a child care center or group child care home for up to ninety days. Any child care center or group child care home that provides child care services to homeless children and youths at such center or home assist families experiencing homelessness in obtaining up-to-date vaccination records or assist families by connecting them to health resources to update their children's vaccinations in a timely manner. Any child care center or group child care home that provides child care services to homeless children and youths at such center or home shall maintain a record on file of all temporary waiver determinations conducted under this subsection for a period of two years after such homeless children and youths are no longer receiving child care services at such center or home.

Sec. 3h should be amended to read as follows:

(h) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 19a-87b-10 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies relating to physical examination requirements and subsection (k) of section 19a-87b-10 of the regulations of Connecticut state agencies relating to immunization requirements, homeless children and youths, as defined in 42 USC 11434a, as amended from time to time, may be allowed to attend a family child care home for up to ninety days. Any family child care home that provides child care services to homeless children and youths at such center or home assist families experiencing homelessness in obtaining up-to-date vaccination records or assist families by connecting them to health resources to update their children's vaccinations in a timely manner. Any family child care home that provides child care services to homeless children and youths at such home shall maintain a record on file of all temporary waiver determinations conducted under this subsection for a period of two years after such homeless children and youths are no longer receiving child care services at such home.