

## Testimony on HB 5004

### Office of Early Childhood Budget

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Member of the Committee:

My name is Roxanne Dowe-Merchant. I am a teacher at the Childcare Learning Center, Inc. in Stamford, CT.

I believe the state funded programs need to continue to be funded.

If the Childcare Learning Centers, did not get funded and had to close, I would lose my job and then I would have to apply for housing, food stamps and other state programs just to survive. It is hard enough to survive on the small amount I get paid every week.

Childcare Learning Centers and other state funded programs, are high quality NAEYC accredited programs. We follow strict guidelines from the Office of Early Childhood and we either currently have a Bachelor's degree or are working on obtaining by the 2020 deadline. We have a rigorous curriculum to make sure our children are ready for kindergarten when they leave us.

We work for very little compared to public school teachers and we have the same degrees. I feel these young children are our future. I chose to work here for the love I have for children, not for the money. But the money would help a lot.

Please be sure to keep the funding intact for all state funded programs offering care and education to our young children so that they are ready for life time of learning. This is also extremely important for families so that they can continue to work and be self-sufficient.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Dowe-Merchant

Head Teacher

Childcare Learning Center, William Pitt