



**Testimony for Appropriations Committee Hearing
February 19, 2016**

Presented by Richard Porth in Support of the Commission on Children

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Commission on Children and the crucial work it does to benefit children and families in Connecticut.

My name is Richard Porth and I serve as CEO of United Way of Connecticut. Our United Way and many local United Ways in Connecticut have long worked to promote good outcomes for young children in our communities. Along the way, we have appreciated the leadership provided by the Commission on Children on multiple fronts.

The Commission on Children's work to illuminate childhood poverty and to promote strategies to prevent and/or move out of poverty for children and their families has been important. Last year, the Commission co-sponsored a legislative forum with United Way of Connecticut focused on working families who still struggle financially – ALICE families – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. And we are grateful for the Commission's help in elevating this issue.

The safety and security of young children has long been a priority for the Commission on Children. In the past few years, a concerted effort has been made to assure that young children in early care facilities are safe during emergency events and that a plan for family reunification is in place for particularly disruptive emergencies. United Way of Connecticut's 2-1-1 Child Care has worked hard on this in its role as Connecticut's Child Care Resource and Referral service and we appreciate the work that the Commission on Children has done to support progress here.

Throughout, the Commission on Children has consistently reminded all of us who do this work that it is crucial to keep parents engaged and informed and empowered to take care of their family's needs. The Commission has worked hard so that the voices of parents are heard when policy and programs which impact their families are considered.

Finally, the Commission on Children has been creative in securing resources to do this work, which complement and build on the state's investment in this important work.

For all these reasons, I want to express support for the Commission on Children and the important work it does for Connecticut and its children and families; and I want to thank the state for its ongoing support of the Commission and its work.

Thank you.