

## Testimony on Behalf of the Commission on Children

I am pleased to offer this testimony on behalf of the Commission on Children, because I believe that their work improves the lives of Connecticut's children and families.

Connecticut is home to approximately 80,000 low income families with children ages 0-8. In 60% of those families, no parent has full-time, year-round employment and in 80% of those families, no parent has an associate's degree or higher. The Commission supports programs and policies that develop parent leadership, provide opportunities for educational attainment, and move families out of poverty.

Children are our state's most vulnerable citizens and we know that to change the lives of children, programs and services must be able to work with the whole family, value diversity, and insure equity so that even our most impoverished children receive appropriate education, healthcare, and other critical supports. The Commission on Children is invested in the development of policies that lead to better outcomes for struggling families.

The Commission also helps bring the diverse viewpoints of families into the purview of public policy. By insuring that parent voices are heard in the development of policies that affect families, our elected officials can understand the barriers that prevent families from moving out of poverty.

As the Director of the Move UP! Adult Literacy Partnership, I have had the pleasure of working closely with the Commission on the State's Two Generational Strategies, so I have seen first-hand, the strength and value of their work. I could list their accomplishments and talk about how well they represent Connecticut on the national stage, but I don't need to. I've had the opportunity to hear a mother talk about how the Parent Leadership Training Institute changed her life, to hear fathers talk about learning to be "good dads," and to work directly with a group of parent volunteers whose life experiences will shape the design and build of two-generational strategies for school and workforce readiness across the State. Their work speaks for itself.

There is no question that the work of the Connecticut Commission on Children, with a staff of only five people, has a tremendous impact on the quality of life for children and families in our State. We will all be grateful if their funding can remain intact.