

**Testimony Regarding HB5306**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD**

TO: Education Committee

February 24, 2016

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished Members of the Education Committee:

I am testifying today as a member of the New Haven early childhood community. As the New Haven School Readiness Project Director I work closely with 33 preschool programs who serve over 1000 children funded by the State School Readiness Grant. Eighty-six percent of the children are in families whose incomes range from 0 to 50% of the State Median Income. All of these programs are required to become accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young (NAEYC ) and to maintain their accreditation if they are to continue to receive State School Readiness funds.

All these programs, and many more, have been guided through this rigorous process by the Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP) which has 5 regional offices throughout Connecticut. Connecticut's AFP is nationally known as a model of effective, high quality support with an impressive record of helping programs through the process. Connecticut currently has 447 NAEYC accredited programs ranking 3rd in the country and 1st per capita.

The proposed language changes in HB5306, dramatically alters the way services will be implemented for one of the most successful quality improvement programs in this state. The Office of Early Childhood's proposed changes will:

- Eliminates the legislative mandate for a regional delivery model
- Eliminates the priority to support programs serving low income families
- Infact, eliminates all legislative language as to how the Accreditation support will serve our communities
- Turns over the funding for Accreditation support to United Way of CT in a no-bid contract.

My question is **WHY ARE WE TRYING TO FIX SOMETHING THAT IS NOT BROKEN? WHY ARE WE DISMANTLING A PROGRAM THAT WORKS?**

I respectfully request that you keep the existing language in Section 6. Section 17b-749e of the general statute regarding the structure of the Accreditation Facilitation Project going forward.

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