

My name is Lauren Halpin, and I am the Director at Western Connecticut State University Child Care in Danbury. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our program. We request that you reject the language change in bill 5306, related to the regional accreditation projects (AFP) in Section 6 (see below):

Sec. 6. Section 17b-749e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2016*):

The Office of Early Childhood shall, **[establish and fund five regional accreditation projects, within available appropriations. The office shall select qualified applicants for each region through a request for proposal process. The office shall give priority to child day care facilities where at least twenty per cent of the children live with families earning less than seventy-five per cent of the state median income level]** within available appropriations, support programs providing child care services to achieve accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The office shall set priorities for receipt of support under this section.

We ask that you allow the current, highly regarded and nationally recognized, high quality AFP support system to remain as a regional entity and that you do not make this another single entity state initiative. Being in the western part of CT, we appreciate the local contact and the regional trainings. My center was supported AFP facilitator Kristen Kennen during our reaccreditation process. Her assistance is critical to our program being able to maintain accreditation. Please consider this request when making your decision on Bill 5306.