

Education Committee
Public Testimony
March 2, 2016

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 112
AN ACT PROVIDING CHILD CARE FOR ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS ENROLLED IN
APPROVED HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann; Vice Chairs Senator Winfield, Representative Sanchez; Ranking Members Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle; and esteemed members of the Committee.

My name is Chrissy Cruz. I'm writing to support SB 112. I am 27 years old and the sole provider for a family of four. I live with my boyfriend Justin and our two kids, Eleina(3) and Amir(4). My boyfriend had to quit his job to stay home with the kids because the cost of day care is just too high. The weekly cost for day care was equivalent to his paycheck. He would work full time and stay with nothing. Justin and the children get Husky Health insurance through the state and I am insured through my employer. We get a small amount of SNAP assistance. However, we do not qualify for child care assistance. We tried applying for Care for Kids while he was working and got denied because we were just over the income guidelines. We tried applying again in hopes he could start working again and got denied a second time. We were basically told there is no need for them to pay for childcare because there is an adult home in the house. As you can imagine this puts us in a tough place. If we both try to work we are told we can't get assistance, even if we are only over the limit by 100. It leaves one of us working full time JUST to cover child care. Not only does the cost of child care make it difficult for us to both work and care for our children, but it takes a toll on us as a family. We want to be able to do much more for our family, but feel like we are being held back. As parents we want what's best for our children. Feeling like you are stuck and have no room for growth. Working harder and getting nowhere. It's the worst feeling in the world. We would love to further our education in order to open the door to greater employment opportunities. Those opportunities will only open the door to even higher incomes so the cost of childcare would not be as much of an issue. With childcare costing about 400 a week, it's almost impossible to afford the "luxury" of education, but for hard working families this isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. How am I ever supposed to give my family the life they deserve if I can't go to college and attain a degree? I fully support Senate Bill 112 as I am all for helping working adults further their education. Not only for themselves, but for their families. As a lifelong resident of Connecticut I look forward to the growth of our state, but that can only happen if we help those in need. Help those who are trying their hardest to help themselves. Helping parents, like myself and Justin who just want to do better for our kids by setting an example. I'd like to thank you all for your time on this very important matter.

Best Regards,

Chrissy Snow Cruz

Meriden, CT