

Testimony Regarding S.B. No. 912 An Act Concerning Revisions to the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators

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Education Committee

February 28, 2017

Chairpersons Fleischmann, Slossberg and Boucher and members of the Education Committee: My name is Regina Miller and I am an Emeritus Faculty member, Early Childhood Education, University of Hartford. The development of early childhood professionals working in many capacities with the young children of Connecticut has brought us to the point of expecting and needing a well-prepared workforce equipped and ready to meet the changing needs of the early childhood population. Young children do not come in one type of package from one kind of family of socio-economic level. Early childhood professionals must be prepared to educate, nurture, refer as appropriate, and intervene as needed. All of this effort pays off in the readiness of young children who have had the benefit of a good early childhood education brought to them by well-prepared educators specifically prepared to work with this age populations and their families.

The following comments are submitted with regard to S.B. No. 912 An Act Concerning Revisions to the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators.

This bill would reduce the qualifications needed for an early childhood educator, moving Connecticut further away from providing high quality early care and education to all young children. The early childhood education workforce engages with children and families in very different ways than other teaching areas at the elementary and secondary levels.

State of CT teacher certification is one way to prepare early childhood educators but the Higher Education community in CT has worked long and hard to develop high quality pathways to enable young children who are not yet in the public schools to have access to highly prepared professionals.

The Early Childhood Teacher Credential was carefully developed and vetted across many constituencies in order for those working in early childhood to be part of a competency-based workforce, not limited to the role of the teacher as defined by public school employment/certification.

I would urge the committee to consider the following:

To create a true early care and education system and stay on par with other states in this effort, Connecticut must maintain momentum toward raising the bar for those who provide the groundwork for all learning to come. The proposed reduction in qualifications for early education providers moves us away from this goal. In this era of focusing on better preparation of young children to be ready for entry into more formal education, recommending and supporting a BA in ECE or a similar standard would result in a significant raising of standards for teachers in early childhood programs.

High quality child care requires a highly educated and specialized workforce. Too that goal please allow BA's in Early Childhood, child study, child development, or human growth and development from any college in the country that is accredited by their regional accrediting body.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony regarding S.B. No. 912.
Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.