



**Thames Valley Council
for Community Action, Inc.**

Deborah Monahan, Executive Director, TVCCA

S.B. No. 912

Education Committee – March 1, 2017

Distinguished members of the Education Committee.

My name is Deborah Monahan and I am the Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA)

I am here to testify on S.B. 912, AAC Revisions to the Staff Qualification Requirements for Early Childhood Educators.

The language in SB 912 looks to expand the group of qualified staff to include teachers graduating from regionally accredited institutions. However, it does not go far enough. You must eliminate the language in the bill that gives Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Board of Regents approval authority.

At present, the Office of Early Childhood has put in policy an unnecessary obstacle to achieving compliance for Qualified Staff Members (QSM) in classrooms by interpreting the law in an extraordinarily restrictive manner.

A staff member must have their Bachelor's Degree in ECE from an approved Early Childhood Teaching Credential (ECTC) institution accepted by the Office of Early Childhood. These colleges are only in Connecticut.

TVCCA supports the requirement of teachers having a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. However, we do not support OEC's requirement that the Bachelor's Degree come from a pre-determined, limited list of higher education institutions ONLY here in Connecticut.

On the OEC list of approved Connecticut institutions, there are currently 18 approved colleges but only 5 offer a BA degree and only after the certain approved dates. For example, if I graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University before 2013, I cannot be approved by OEC to be a

Qualified Staff Member unless I go through a very rigorous individual review process.

We have offered employment to individuals who have Bachelor's degrees from schools not on the list (perhaps from another state), but then tell them they must go through the individual review process. When told that they must put together a detailed portfolio to document their course work, many tell us they are not interested in working in our program.

This is burdensome and takes staff time away from the children and families. When reviewing the OEC website for the Individual Review Route (ECTC), it should be noted that only 7 candidates have completed this process in the last two years. That is a very telling number!!!

Providers are struggling to hire and retain qualified teachers. You must remove the approval language and allow us to hire staff with a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from any regionally accredited institution in the country.

I come from Southeastern Connecticut - home to the US Submarine Base, the US Coast Guard, Pfizer, General Dynamics Electric Boat and two very large casinos. People come to Connecticut to work in these businesses. If they are accompanied by a spouse or partner who has a Bachelor Degree in ECE from an institution outside of Connecticut, no matter how renowned, **THOSE INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT CONSIDERED QUALIFIED STAFF TEACHERS BY OUR OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.**

I urge you to pass Bill 912 without the requirement that the OEC and President of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities determine the approved institutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter.