



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 28, 2017

Dear Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann, Representative Lavielle, and distinguished committee members,

My name is Jim O'Rourke and I am the CEO of the Greater Waterbury YMCA. I would like to offer testimony regarding: **Raised Bill 912, AAC Revisions to the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators.**

I agree with what I believe is the *intent* of the proposed language- to allow someone with a degree in early childhood, child studies, child development and human growth and development, from a regionally accredited college or university to be considered qualified as a teacher in a state funded program. However, as written, SB 912 it is problematic for multiple reasons. The new language in section (III) of SB 912 would allow any individual with a bachelor's degree in any subject, plus 12 credits in early childhood education to be considered a qualified staff member in a state funded early childhood program. I strongly disagree with this language and feel this change would be a huge setback for Connecticut and the growth we have made in the early childhood field. I would recommend that Section B deleted (III) of the proposed new language and **retain the original language of PA 15-134 that states** "such bachelor degree shall include a concentration in early childhood education, including, but not limited to early childhood education, child study, child development, or human growth and development"

Section B and C of the bill has language that states "**provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Office of Early Childhood**". This is the code language that allows the Office of Early Childhood to require an ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) for a teacher who has a degree in early childhood from any school other than the handful they have deemed acceptable. This provision is seriously limiting the number of degreed, qualified teachers programs are able to hire. With this provision a student could graduate from Wheelock, Bank Street or St Josephs – all prestigious institutions and still not be approved as a qualified staff member in a publically funded program. This makes absolutely no sense. I would suggest removing any reference that says "provided such bachelor's degree is approved by the OEC".

Finally, I would ask that section 4 of the original PA 15-134 be retained. This section (below) is what allows a person with a degree in a related field with 12 early childhood credits demonstrate their competencies. This will allow for a prospective new hiring pool but also supports teachers working with our youngest children have the necessary core competencies.

*(4) Any individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, other than those bachelor's degrees specified in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of this subsection, may submit documentation concerning such degree for review and assessment by the office as to whether such degree has a sufficient concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the requirements set forth in said subparagraphs (B) and (C). (5) Any individual with an associate's*

Thank you for your consideration.

James O'Rourke  
CEO