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Testimony Supporting S.B. 934, An Act Expanding Eligibility in the Care 4 Kids Program to Parents Enrolled in Other Types of School

**Education Committee
March 6, 2019**

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit **written testimony in support of Senate Bill 934, An Act Expanding Eligibility in the Care 4 Kids Program to Parents Enrolled in Other Types of School.**

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region. As a community foundation, we manage, grow, and distribute approximately \$1 billion in assets to promote equitable opportunity for all residents in our region, particularly in the areas of education, community safety, and community and economic development. Since 1987, we have invested more than \$40 million in early childhood in the Greater Hartford area. It is our goal to ensure that all children, especially those most vulnerable, have access to high-quality early childhood experiences, based on national research that confirms that early childhood experiences are key to children's and families' life-long success. The Foundation has focused on supporting early childhood policy, funding and program quality, recognizing their importance to ensuring optimal safety and learning outcomes for children, and pathways to economic security for their families and caregivers.

The Hartford Foundation strongly supports Senate Bill 934, which would extend child care subsidy eligibility to families in education and training programs. For many working families, access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality child care and early education is both a necessity to attain and maintain a job and to foster the learning and development of their young children. For many families, Care 4 Kids is a critical program that ensures that working parents can access safe, high-quality child care in their communities while they work. Extending Care 4

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10 Columbus Boulevard, 8th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

860-548-1888
fax 860-249-3561
www.hfpg.org

Kids to families who are pursuing education or training to increase their earning potential will help families exit poverty and reach greater self-sufficiency.

In particular, we recommend that the committee ensure that this bill extend Care 4 Kids to families in all job training programs. The Foundation has seen how essential access to child care is in our workforce development investments. Our current work has centered on serving Greater Hartford residents who face significant challenges to securing employment. In all our workforce development efforts, we have seen the challenge of providing adequate child care services. In 2016, the Foundation implemented a Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) in nine Greater Hartford sites. Our funding supports collaborative efforts to promote engaging adult education, community college and other job training and service providers, as well as employers.

In 2017, of the 377 participants enrolled across CPI program sites, 53 percent were women and 34 percent of all participants enrolled reported having dependent children. **An evaluation of these workforce programs found that participants across the job sites struggled with accessing child care.** One site that focused on serving low-income women with dependent children recognized early on that child care posed one of the greatest obstacles for these women to participate in the program. This impacted recruitment and retention and the site struggled to find a reliable child care provider during training hours.

At a time when nonprofits, industry leaders, institutions of higher education, philanthropy and others are collaborating to support workforce development in Connecticut, **extending Care 4 Kids to families in education and training programs is an investment in our children, our families, and the vibrancy of our state economy.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at policy@hfpg.org or 860-548-1888.