



Connecticut Association for Human Services
237 Hamilton Street, Suite 208
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.cahs.org

Elsa Núñez, President
Robert Blakey Interim CEO
860.951.2212
860.951.6511 fax

March 6, 2019

SB 934 AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM TO PARENTS ENROLLED IN OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 934.

My name is Elizabeth Fraser and I am the Policy Director for the Connecticut Association for Human Services. CAHS is a statewide nonprofit agency that works to reduce poverty and promote equity and economic success for children and families through both policy and program initiatives.

According to 2017 ACS data sample, in Connecticut, there are over 15,000 parents, with children under 5 that have less than a high school equivalency. An additional 48,000 parents with children under 5, have only a high school education. For these families, a path to prosperity is difficult at best. The opportunity for full-time, year-round employment, with potential for growth, is often not available without additional training or education. Employment is often limited to part-time work, with unpredictable hours and little hope for advancement. This provides little stability for parents, causes household stress, and has a negative effect on children. Additionally, disaggregated data tells a clear story, black and brown children are disproportionately affected by poverty.

Juxtaposed to this, is the need in Connecticut for a trained and educated workforce to attract business, fill jobs, and grow our economy. We have this potential workforce, but to be part of a growing economy, parents such as those lacking educational credentials, will need to access the training and education necessary for employment. For parents, that includes childcare. Lack of access to consistent affordable childcare for education or long-term training, is one of the most difficult barriers to overcome.

Connecticut is one of only a handful of states that severely restricts access to Care4Kids subsidies for the educational and training opportunities which have potential to lift families out of poverty. As it stands now, Care4Kids can only be accessed for work, for high school students, or for short-term training to get eligible TANF parents quickly into the workforce. We perpetuate a cycle of poverty.

The passage of SB 934 will give us the opportunity to start changing this dynamic and give many more families access to opportunity and economic mobility.

The level and quality of parental educational attainment affects the ability to achieve family economic stability and future economic mobility. This in turn can influence the long-term outcomes of the next

generation, the children. There are many studies that demonstrate that a parent's level of education correlates with a child's future academic success. Additionally, increased family income in a child's early years, increases the likelihood of that their future earnings will be higher. Using Care4Kids for longer term education and training will not only provide for families in the near future, but can begin to disrupt the cycle generational poverty that we are experiencing in Connecticut.

It is important to note that there are a few educational programs, in adult education and in some colleges that provide childcare. Additionally there are some training programs that might provide some childcare. The problem is they are not to scale and provide opportunity for only a small number of lucky people. Additionally, as programs get cut, the ability to provide childcare diminishes. This bill would give much greater access to families, and allow poorly funded programs that offer childcare, the ability to grow and become more widely available.

CAHS has been at the forefront of advocating for two generational solutions to ameliorate the cycle of generational poverty. Care4Kids has long been such a program, providing childcare subsidies for income eligible, working parents, so that they can maintain employment, knowing that their children are in safe, nurturing, early care environments. Businesses have employees, parents are able to work and children are taken care of. We want this to stay in place and grow. However, we cannot forget those that we historically leave behind, the undereducated, those whose schools have failed them, those that we keep poor by allowing them to work, but not providing the means to prosper.

We need to support the passage of SB934, including additional funding, to support adult and continuing education, allowing these families, adults and children, to fully participate in Connecticut's future economy.