



ALL OUR KIN INC

PO BOX 8477 NEW HAVEN CONNECTICUT 06530 T 203-772-2294 F 203-772-2386 WWW.ALLOURKIN.ORG

## **Education Committee Public Hearing**

**March 6, 2019**

**SB 930, SB 931, SB 933, SB 934**

**Natalie Vieira, Policy Associate, All Our Kin**

Representative Sanchez, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, and members of the Education Committee, my name is Natalie Vieira, and I am the Policy Associate at All Our Kin. All Our Kin is a nonprofit with 20 years of experience training and supporting more than 500 home-based child care providers—family child care providers—in Connecticut. These family child care providers run high-quality child care businesses that transform opportunities for thousands of our youngest children and their families while making significant contributions to the economy.

I am testifying in support of SB 931, SB 933, and SB 934, all of which pertain to the Care4Kids child care subsidy program. Connecticut faces an acute shortage of licensed child care, particularly for infants and toddlers; according to the Office of Early Childhood, we need an additional 51,000 licensed infant and toddler slots. As a result, the OEC has identified increasing the state's supply of licensed care for infants and toddlers as its top priority, and Care4Kids is a vital mechanism to help us get there.

Unlike preschool settings, Care4Kids is essentially the only funding available to help families pay for infant and toddler care. This is important because infant and toddler care is prohibitively expensive, costing on average more than \$15,000 per year in a child care center in Connecticut. And, Care4Kids is also essentially the only funding available to help parents pay for care in family child care settings. This is critically important because family child care programs often serve families that face the greatest barriers to accessing care, such as families with infants and toddlers, families that work nontraditional hours, and families that lack access to transportation.

Which brings me to SB 930: “An Act Concerning the Creation of a Pilot Program for an Early Childhood Business Incubator Model.” Despite the critical role that family child care providers play in serving Connecticut's most overburdened, under-resourced families, they often face significant barriers to starting their child care businesses. SB 930 would allow for an innovative approach to building the state's supply of family child care. SB 930 creates entrepreneurship opportunities for would-be providers whose homes may not be suitable for family child care (for example, if they do not have enough space to meet state licensing requirements).

SB 930 creates an exception in four pilot communities—New Britain, New Haven, Bridgeport, and Stamford—that would allow a person or group of people to operate child care programs in a space other than their home while still abiding by family child care licensing regulations. The idea is that these family child care providers would be able to start their businesses and build

capital in an incubator space, allowing them to save enough money to transition to a housing arrangement that will support their family child care program. The benefits of SB 930 are multifaceted: entrepreneurs will start new child care business that support their own families and contribute to the broader economy, while providing a much-needed service to the community in the form of high-quality, affordable, accessible child care.

I urge you to support SB 930 to reduce barriers to child care in Connecticut. Thank you for considering this important step towards ensuring that quality, licensed child care is accessible to all children and families who need it.