

Dear Education Committee Chairs Sanchez and McCrory,

I am writing in support of [S.B. No. 937](#) (RAISED) EDUCATION. 'AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS', to establish a student loan forgiveness program for early childhood educators. As someone who has only been able to pursue any level of higher education through student loans and as a faculty member advising students in early childhood education at the undergraduate and graduate levels this act for student loan forgiveness is essential for early childhood educators to be able to pursue professional growth opportunities and remain in the field of early childhood education. By retaining and investing in those who are dedicated to children and families, we build a strong workforce that draws from and reflects our CT communities. The salary cap makes certain to support those who need the resource most and the 10 years timeline reflects the real pace of life so many of us face as we seek to improve ourselves, our careers and care for one or two generations of family members. This bill should not be confused or conflated with a wage increase as this bill is a mechanism for individuals to access professional growth, increased credentials and improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality early educators. Through loan forgiveness dedicated individuals will not have to leave the field in order to earn enough to pay debt or even make a living. High quality early educators can remain focused on infant and toddler and center-based care if they wish rather than required to find jobs with older children or in sectors with higher pay. For at least three decades individuals have had to find jobs that pay better rather than share their intelligence, talents, care and community knowledge with children and families in community settings. This bill is an investment in Connecticut's workforce now and our future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

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