

**Testimony regarding: S.B. No. 937 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**

Submitted By:  
Madison Fornal

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Madison Fornal, and I live in Middletown.

I am honored to be presenting testimony on the issue of S.B. No. 937 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

This is an issue that is very important to me. I have worked as a PreK teacher for the last five and a half years. I have spent the last five years completing my Associates Degree, and two Bachelors Degrees in order to complete certification in the State of CT. The cost of tuition to attend CT community colleges and universities makes it difficult to pay the bills that are required for survival (rent, insurance, groceries). The amount of loans required to take out while working full time in the Early Childhood Field and completing multiple degrees is astronomical and prevents the majority of professionals from completing their degrees. This in turn prevents child care professionals from meeting the current deadline for obtaining a degree, in turn pushing the deadline farther and farther back.

The option for student loan forgiveness for Early Childhood Professionals is required in order to compete with those in Elementary fields. The US Department of Education gives student loan forgiveness (Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program) to Elementary and Secondary teachers who work a minimum of five years in a low income school district. This doesn't support Early Childhood Professionals who teach Preschool or PreK in those same districts and for longer periods of time. With the option for student loan forgiveness in Early Childhood, professionals wouldn't feel the need to take their 113 certifications in the State and work in Kindergarten or First grade because they would have the same supports as their Elementary peers.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut's young children, and requires immediate action. If a student loan forgiveness program is implemented in the State of CT, more professionals would stay in the age groups they love. A win for Early Childhood Professionals would be to be looked at as equals to their Elementary Ed peers and given the same support for helping get students ready for when they enter Kindergarten and First Grade. If more teachers were given support and student loan forgiveness, then more would be

motivated to complete their degrees in a timely manner, and continue to work in the settings they feel most passionate about.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about S.B. No. 937 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

Thank you for your consideration.