

Middlesex Coalition for Children

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Testimony from Izzi Greenberg, Director, Middlesex Coalition for Children

[S.B. No. 937](#) (RAISED) EDUCATION. 'AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee,

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony on this and the other early childhood bills before the committee today. I run the Middlesex Coalition for Children, which works to improve outcomes for children and their families in Middletown and Middlesex County. Our coalition includes a wide range of families, schools, programs, and early care and education programs.

I'm testifying to support [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.

In Middletown, we are increasingly losing quality educators because they are not able to support their families on early care teaching salaries.

Financial relief initiatives like loan forgiveness are an interim strategy, not a long-term solution to achieve appropriate wages and benefits. However, as we work toward greater parity and a pay compensation schedule for early educators, loan forgiveness can improve the recruitment and retention of credentialed, high-quality early educators.

Despite the importance of cultivating and maintaining a well-educated early childhood workforce in Connecticut, pursuing the credentials and higher education required of an increasing number of early educators can leave teachers grappling with high amounts of debt. With an average debt-burden of \$38,510, it is clear that Connecticut must take courageous steps to ensure that early educators can access loan forgiveness.

The most important development happens between birth and kindergarten. Quality care establishes the basis for a healthy and productive life and having teachers that are supported and compensated supports quality. Early care teachers are increasingly asked to be experts...in child development, social-emotional growth, early childhood learning benchmarks, nutrition, and the list goes on and on. They have degrees and expertise but aren't paid rates commensurate with their knowledge. Our early care system needs stable, long-term, quality teaching staff to ensure the best and brightest future for our children. Loan forgiveness would be one step toward that quality.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective,



Izzi Greenberg
Executive Director

Improving the lives of children in Middletown and Middlesex County.