

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

Submitted By:
Monique Helms

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Monique Helms, and I live in Stratford.

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 currently have a student loan that I am paying off. However, with the cost of living continually increasing and the slow increase of wages in early childhood education, student loans have become somewhat of a burden. When I first started out in this field back in 2002, there were early childhood programs set up to assist teachers with the cost of continuing their education in this field; whether it was the employer paying a percentage of the cost or reimbursing some of the cost.

Education is expensive and time consuming. The sacrifice of time spent with family due to work and school can take its toll, so why can't teachers afford the luxury of being compensated for their commitment to this field.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut's young children, and requires immediate action. If this policy change is enacted I believe more personnel in this field would attend college and finish their education. College is just getting too expensive and making minimum wage or entry level pay is just not going to cut it. There has to be a genuine incentive to attract teachers to finish their education in this field. There are people today who would love to finish college and attain a degree but most of them are living paycheck to paycheck.

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.