

**Education Committee
March 6, 2019**

**Senate Bill 931 – Support
Senate Bill 935 – Support
Senate Bill 937 – Support**

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee:

My name is JoAnn Johnson and I am a family child care provider. I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 931, An Act Concerning Payments To Child Care Providers and Senate Bill No. 935, An Act Requiring The Office Of Early Childhood To Develop An Early Childhood Educator Compensation Schedule, provided both are modified to include family child care providers.

Family child care providers are struggling with late payments from the Care 4 Kids program. We are told that this is at least partly the fault of a computer system update, but this is not the first computer update we have seen, and yet the time it takes for us to receive payment from Care 4 Kids has not improved.

The fact that Care 4 Kids is giving many families a hard time about paperwork is also very frustrating and seems to be slowing down payments even further. I have one parent who is self-employed. Even though she turns in her pay stubs, Care 4 Kids still hasn't paid me. Instead, they have involved the Department of Social Services in the payment process for the verification of self-employed individuals. I am sympathetic because I know that it's hard to assist people. I worked in social services myself, so I'm patient to a point, but I haven't gotten paid for my work watching this child since July 2018.

These problems need to get fixed. I have been providing child care since 2012 and I still do not know who my Care 4 Kids liaison is, nor do I have a direct number or extension that I can call like I am supposed to. I am stuck with whoever answers the phone at Care 4 Kids, so there is no continuity when I am trying to address issues.

These are the kinds of problems that make it hard to recruit new providers into the Care 4 Kids program.

I also encourage you to support, Senate Bill No. 937, An Act Concerning A Student Loan Forgiveness Program For Early Childhood Educators. This is a good bill that will help many child care providers with education loans who are struggling.

JoAnn Johnson