



Education Committee

March 6th, 2019

Testimony Regarding: SB930, SB931, SB932, SB933, SB934, SB935, SB936, SB937, SB938

Representative Sanchez, Senator McCrory, and other esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is September Jones and I am submitting testimony on behalf of KinderCare to speak on eight of the bills on the agenda today.

SB 930: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR MODEL.

While we understand the need for this legislation, our worry lies around the logistics of how this legislation would be implemented. Would these facilities still be subject to Group Child Care Home (GCCH) rules and regulations (including ratios and group size) even though the physical setting is no longer a home? Due to the nature of the current proposed language, there is a worry that those regulations don't necessarily apply.

SB 931: AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENTS TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

While we are supportive of this legislation, we urge the committee to expand the language regarding "any increase in funding to child care centers and school readiness program providers are to be used for increasing education salaries" to be more flexible to the general needs of maintenance, upkeep, curricular improvements and upgrades along with technology improvements within the child care facility, beyond the sole use of those funds for salary increases. We also support the requirement of payments to be at least equal to the 75th percentile, as that is our goal for Care4Kids payment rates.

SB 932: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

We fully support this legislation as extensions for compliance are always helpful, especially when child care centers have employees going back to school and taking classes while working full-time.

SB 933: AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM.

We very much support this legislation. With the high wages in Connecticut, many parents do not qualify even though they cannot afford quality child care on their own. It would greatly benefit working families throughout the state who are in need of child care services.



SB 934: AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM TO PARENTS ENROLLED IN OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL.

We very much support this legislation. Parents who are attending school full-time (especially high school and college students) need child care too. This legislation would enable them the financial security for future success in the workforce and the ability to continue their education.

SB 935: AN ACT REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO DEVELOP AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPENSATION SCHEDULE.

As this legislation is currently written, we believe issues will arise around developing a payment schedule due to the variable nature of child care facilities. Ranges in levels of education for each employee as well as other variables that contribute to what child care educators earn in additional benefits outside of compensation also are important to consider outside of a vacuum. We oppose this legislation as it is currently written.

SB 936: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

As written, we are concerned about the legislation's removal of the "Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships" from the priority listing. Does that mean they won't qualify for subsidy at all? We feel this goes against the intent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. On the other hand, if the legislation states that these partnerships won't be prioritized on a waiting list, that seems reasonable, but the EHS-CCP money is intended to supplement, not supplant the existing state child care subsidy money. If the intent to disqualify them altogether, we would oppose that removal strongly. The language surrounding care for foster children is strong and thoughtful, and our main concerns lie with the EHS-CCP monies.

SB 937: AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

While there are not many specifics yet to the proposed legislation, anything to support the workforce is much appreciated and much needed. We believe this legislation would also be able to further our intent to reach the goals set out by the legislature for compliance for staff qualifications and provide employees an outlet to continue to further their education.

Thank you so much for your time today, and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments what you may have.