

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

Submitted By:  
Clare LaCourse

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Clare LaCourse, and I live in Deep River.

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. For the last 8 years I have worked as an instructor in the Early Childhood Education department at Post University. I witness the excitement of the students as they begin their student teaching assignments and learn to prepare exciting, educational lessons for the students. At the same time, I hear of the struggles many of them experience while holding down a job or two to keep up with their growing school loans, while also covering rents, groceries and clothing.

Research has found that PreK education makes a difference in reading, writing and arithmetic and those benefits last through 8th grade and possibly beyond. CT should do its best to encourage professionals who can support this effort by creating a loan forgiveness plan to assist with the struggle of paying student loans incurred while pursuing the education needed to provide our children with the best possible start to their education.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut's young children, and requires immediate action. Over the past several decades, the success of publicly-funded programs such as Head Start has shown that high quality early educational intervention can help to combat poverty and improve opportunities for children who may be at risk. Recent research on the amazingly complex and rapid development of very young children's brains has given us further insight into the importance of the early years. With this knowledge, shouldn't CT look for ways to cultivate and maintain a well-educated, well prepared early childhood work force? Creating a loan forgiveness plan will allow CT the opportunity to recruit and retain skilled early childhood teachers who may otherwise struggle to pay student loans.

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.