

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

Submitted By:
Donna Marino

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Donna Marino, and I live in Middletown.

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 am a Family Engagement Coordinator for Middletown Schools and work with families who are trying to support their families and empower themselves.

So many parents struggle to pay their bills and meet their basic needs because they work in low paying jobs and are unable to afford to go back to school or if they do and then work in preschools they still are not paid enough to support their own children. Once a preschool teacher can get a better job they will leave the preschool even if they love the work. This causes high turnover and a lack of consistent care and support for children.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut's young children, and requires immediate action. Parents want what is best for their children and families. Helping parents support themselves with higher wages and education will model this work and lifestyle for their own children and can help end the cycle of poverty. I have seen the joy in a parent when they get a better job and education and are able to better support their own family. This empowerment and confidence transfers to the children and decreases the trauma and household stress our families deal with on a daily basis.

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.