

March 5, 2019

In Support of 931, 935, 937

Dear Education Committee:

My name is Jessica Metcalf and I am a Kindergarten Head Teacher at Mt. Olive Child Development Center in Hartford, CT. I have worked for Mt. Olive Child Development Center for the past 22 years. When I began my career as a Pre-K teacher I had a Bachelor's Degree in Child Study as well as my Teacher Certification in grades K-6, and was making around \$34,000 a year. I was promoted to Kindergarten Head Teacher a few years later, and at that point decided to go back to school to obtain my Master's Degree. After achieving my Master's degree my salary increased to about \$44,000. However, I, along with my co-workers have not seen a raise in our pay in 11 years because of the lack of funds or the increase in funding for Early Childhood programs.

Having a Master's degree in Education I never thought it would be a struggle for me to pay my bills, or have to live paycheck to paycheck even with my fiancé's income. You can imagine the struggle to pay everything (mortgage, car payment, student loan, light/gas bills, etc...), when the cost of living continually rises but not your paycheck. I am still paying off over \$25,000 for my education loans, at times having to take forbearance due to the fact that I am unable to keep up with payments. I no longer have a cushion of funds available for myself in case of an emergency as I have had to continuously borrow from the funds I had saved up in order to keep a house, a car and also provide for my stepdaughter

It is not fair teachers in Child Development Centers, with the same qualifications as teachers in public schools, have such a disparity in their pay. We are teachers and educators as well who are setting the foundations for a lifetime of learning. It is time we are recognized and respected for the impact we have on building the foundation of children's education!

Thank you,

Jessica Metcalf