

Education Committee 3/6/2019

Testimony of Stacey Zimmerman SEIU CT State Council



**Support:**

\***S.B. No. 812** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD STATUTES.

\***S.B. No. 930** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR MODEL.

\***S.B. No. 931** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENTS TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

\***S.B. No. 932** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

\***S.B. No. 933** (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM.

\***S.B. No. 934** (RAISED) AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM TO PARENTS ENROLLED IN OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL.

\***S.B. No. 936** (RAISED) AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

\***S.B. No. 937** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

\***H.B. No. 7082** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

\***H.B. No. 7083** (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF PUERTO RICAN AND LATINO STUDIES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Chairman Sanchez and McCrory distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Stacey Zimmerman; I am here today representing the Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council the state's largest labor union with over 65,000 members. These include the thousands of early childhood educators both in home and center based of CSEA SEIU Local 2001.

SEIU supports the continued efforts by this committee and the state in its efforts to increase access and quality in the early education and child care. Local 2001 takes its role working with stakeholders to protect and strengthen the Care for Kids program extremely seriously. Our members in early education are located throughout the state in every community. The need for quality child care has no town or district borders.

Our members are dedicated to quality care for the children of Connecticut but have failed to receive the same quality of care from OEC's Care for Kids, program and payment vendor the Connecticut United Way. To live within budget restraints the state has subcontracted the payroll department to the United Way. The United Way in turn was to make sure that the payments for the Care for Kids eligible children would be distributed to the centers and workers.

Sadly, this is not how it has worked out. Thousands of child care workers have gone without payment from the United Way some since before last Christmas. The vast majority of these hard-working people continued with the care they provide because that is the only alternative for the children and parents they serve.

The count from what we can tell is still at 2,300 people not paid. This is unacceptable if not criminal. Maybe one pay period of delays could be understood from a software update, but months and months is negligence. Very few people

would continue to work for nothing but a promise, but this is the situation United Way has created. I can guarantee that the executives at this non-profit get paid a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year and don't miss their paychecks.

We highly encourage OEC and this committee to examine the contract with the Connecticut United Way and institute fines and or demand interest on the delayed payments that have occurred. This is a perfect example of the pitfalls of privatization. Smarter, Faster, Cheaper are the buzz word that entice us as a state to outsource tasks that should be handled in house and it ends up Dumber, Slower, Costlier. The State Comptroller writes the states checks for a living and should be tasked with these payments as well.