

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-934

AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM TO

Title: PARENTS ENROLLED IN OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL.

Vote Date: 3/15/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/6/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

As it stands families are only eligible for Care4Kids if they are attending high school, participating in Temporary Family Assistance Program, or an approved job training program. This bill would expand this eligibility for Care4Kids to people who are participating in higher education, adult education, English language programs, and other occupational programs. This bill would also require advanced notice for the expansion of eligibility for Care4Kids.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner, Diana Wentzell, State Department of Education (SDE):

SDE supports this proposal, but if additional resources are not made available to SDE then this bill would limit the number of beneficiaries of Care4Kids.

Commissioner, Beth Bye, State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC):

Commissioner Bye supports this bill. OEC supports the goal of this bill, but previous cost estimates and budget constraints would make this expansion impossible.

The Office of the Child Advocate for the State of Connecticut (OCA):

OCA supports this bill. OCA wants lawmakers to expand quality childcare for low-income families. OCA has concerns with parents receiving child care from unlicensed child care providers for health and safety reasons. OCA cites horrific stories of infant and toddler deaths caused from unlicensed child care providers. Providing quality childcare to families would prevent the health and safety hazards of unlicensed child care providers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative, Tim Ackert, State of CT House of Representatives:

Representative Ackert supports this bill. The work only requirements prevent parents in need of Care4Kids from continuing their education, this bill solves that problem.

Representative, Robin Comey, State of CT House of Representatives:

Rep. Comey supports this bill. Rep. Comey shares her interactions with parents who have received university scholarships and are in need of Care4Kids subsidies to pay for childcare while studying. Expanding Care4Kids to families seeking higher education will help them exit the cycle of poverty.

KinderCare Education:

KinderCare supports this bill because it would allow parents financial security while they move forward in their education and success in the workforce.

Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CTAEYC):

CTAEYC supports this bill because helping families through Care4Kids to take advantage of educational opportunities will support the demands of the future workforce of Connecticut.

Policy Director, Elizabeth Fraser, Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS):

Ms. Fraser supports this bill. Fifteen thousand parents with children under five have less than a high school degree and forty-eight thousand parents with a child under five only have a high school degree. Low levels of education make poverty more likely and poverty disproportionately affects brown and black people. Connecticut needs a trained workforce and this bill supports that. A small number of states restrict Care4Kids like Connecticut does. This bill promotes economic mobility and a parent's level of economic success correlates with the level of economic success a child will have in the future. CAHS believes this bill is a two generational pathway to success.

Director, Eddie Reichard, Sleeping Giant Day Care, Inc.:

Director Reichard supports this bill. Director Reichard states that Care4Kids is meant for working families, but in order to become a working family one must acquire education so Care4Kids should be expanded to promote education.

Executive Director, Carol Smith, Margaret C. Griffin Child Development Center of Southington, Inc.:

Director Smith supports this bill because supporting young families attain self-sufficiency should be the goal of Care4Kids and this bill furthers that ambition.

Lead Teacher, Jacqueline Valle, Honey Bear Learning Center:

Jacqueline Valle supports this bill. Ms. Valle shares her experience that her employer forced her to attend higher education or she would be demoted or have her hours cut, but because she did not qualify for Care4Kids she was forced to pay for a babysitter. Ms. Valle states this bill is a good step to break the cycle of poverty.

Director, Catherine Vanicky, Honey Bear Learning Center:

Director Vanicky supports this bill.

Policy Associate, Natalie Viera, All Our Kin Inc.:

Ms. Viera supports this bill because Care4Kids expansion relieves barriers for families searching for child care costs which in Connecticut can be more than fifteen thousand dollars a year.

Ph.D., Wendy Waithe Simmons, Connecticut Voice for Children:

Dr. Wendy Waithe Simmons supports this bill. Currently only parents receiving a high school education, TFA funds, and DSS or DOL training programs are eligible for Care4Kids. This bill would promote economic upward mobility and families seeking self-advancement.

Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative (CECFC):

CECFC supports this bill. CECFC cites two national studies by business associations in regards to this bill. The first study, The Committee for Economic Development of the Conference Board published "Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update". The second study, Ready Nation published "Want to Grow the Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis". CECF argues that Connecticut are especially fitted for the expansion of child care subsidies and, with the concept of economic opportunity cost in mind, it would be economically beneficial to fund and expand Care4Kids subsidies.

Executive Director, Merrill Gay, Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance:

Director Gay supports this bill. Director Gay states that Care4Kids is more restrictive than forty seven states in the United States related to childcare subsidy eligibility. This bill promotes a skilled workforce and a skilled workforce will grow the economy and increase prosperity for families. Director Gay requests that this bill be passed so that OFA can make an updated fiscal note available.

Policy Manager, Madeline Granato, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF):

CWEALF supports this bill. Seventy percent of jobs in Connecticut will require postsecondary education in the next ten years. Childcare is especially important for women who wish to continue their education. This bill would expand Care4Kids to a similar level of eligibility for child care subsidies as twenty-eight other states in America

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving:

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving supports this bill because they state expanding Care4Kids to families pursuing education promotes earning potential and class mobility. The Hartford Foundation requests that this bill expand its eligibility to all job training programs. In the Hartford Foundation's experience, childcare is one of the greatest obstacles to recruit and retain women in job training programs.

Director, Izzi Greenberg, Middlesex Coalition for Children:

Director Greenberg supports this bill. Director Greenberg states that in her experience the lack of childcare subsidies was a primary barrier to entry for parents to continue their education and get off welfare. In ten years seventy percent of jobs in Connecticut will require post-secondary and specialized training; this bill would promote a workforce that can fulfill those skilled jobs. Twenty-six percent of adults in Connecticut only have a high school degree and eight percent of adults do not have a high school degree.

Samantha Bell, the Alliance Voice of Community Nonprofits.

Ms. Bell supports this bill. Ms. Bell states that higher education results in wage increases for families. This bill would allow parents to focus on making long term investments in higher education. Care4Kids prevents parents from making financial choices between childcare and basic necessities. Ms. Bell supports the further expansion of childcare for families in Connecticut.

Executive Director, Co-Chair, Mary Cecchinato, Torrington Child Care Center:

Director Cecchinato supports this bill because opening up Care4Kids subsidies to parents who are acquiring higher education would promote self-sufficiency.

Stacey Zimmerman SEIU CT State Council:

Mr. Zimmerman supports this bill. Mr. Zimmerman reiterates SEIU's commitment to quality and equitable child care. Mr. Zimmerman requests that the Committee revisit Connecticut's contract with Connecticut United Way and their involvement in Care4Kids subsidies. Two thousand three hundred workers have missed their paychecks under the state's contract with United Way Connecticut.

Monica Belyea, Opportunity Knocks:

Ms. Belyea supports this bill. This bill would help our economy by allowing parents to pursue their careers and higher wages. Additionally, Care4Kids subsidies allow parents access to high quality childcare, without it, education and training for some parents is impossible.

Safae Aouini, Gemma Cammacho, Julia Hernandez, Sahida Kahnou, Lina Krononberger, Donna Labbe, Laiza Melendez, Anais Marte, Marc Maxi, Khaoula, Soukaina Naredine, Silvia Sancho, Amanda Talbot, Christine Valdez, Even Start:

These stakeholders are all associated with Even Start and they support this bill. Even Start provides childcare for children whose parents are furthering education and career training instruction. Even Start provides occupational therapy and special education needs to children who need it, early identification results in a positive fiscal note through a means of early preventative measures for children in need. This bill would remove barriers to entry for participants in their program, which provides college and career pathways. In short, this bill would enable expansion to programs that allow economic development by providing child care to parents who seek to further their economic status.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None.

Reported by: Colin Carroll

Date: 3/21/19