Testimony regarding: SB 930 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR MODEL
Submitted By:
Maegan Adams

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Maegan Adams, and I live in Harwinton however I work in New Britain and have for the past six years.

I am honored to be presenting testimony on the issue of SB 930 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR MODEL.

This is an issue that is very important to me. As a parent to an infant and an Early Childhood Educator for the past fifteen years it is difficult to find quality childcare. There are a very limited number of infant and toddler spaces available and for a parent that needs to work it would be helpful to see more spots available that are in a safe, nurturing and regulated environment.

Since community research and publication of a local Blueprint for New Britain’s Children was published in 2009, we have recognized that the community has a critical shortage of Infant/Toddler early childhood opportunities. Currently, 92% of the city’s children, do not have access to quality childcare in our community. This shortage impacts the ability of adults, particularly women, who are trying to return to the workplace. In New Britain, this is important, as the rate of children in single female headed households is twice that of the state of CT. In some neighborhoods, it’s four times that of the state. Despite multiple discussions and exploration of this issue, the community has come no closer to resolving this gap.

In addition, prior surveys of parents with young children indicated they preferred a home setting over an institutional setting for care of infants and toddlers. Parents that need to work tend to find someone or anyone to care for their child in times of need especially if they have no alternative childcare options. These individuals that watch children are not always in the safest environments or locations and there are times where you may not know who is in the home. There could be drug users, sex offenders or abusers within the home and there isn’t anyone to monitor that. In regulated centers all individuals must have a background checks to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

This change is needed to increase the number of independent business owners within the city. More than 60% of New Britain residents rent, making operating a business from home difficult. Many of our families, particularly those with a single head of household, are also low income. Thus the cost of licensing and equipping home space to operate a home daycare is also prohibitive. Providing support and resources for individuals that want to open a center but don’t know where or how to go about doing so will open up many new opportunities for entrepreneurship in New Britain.

In an early childhood business incubator, private and shared space would allow individuals who want to run their own childcare business, a place to start. The concept also includes training related to business operations and child development. Typically, those who operate out of their home are isolated from others doing this work. An incubator will give providers supportive peers who can share resources, making this arrangement safer.
New Britain partners have been working on this concept for more than a year. In 2018, representatives from our local early childhood coalition submitted the concept for several early childhood innovation awards. We were invited to participate as a finalist for Harvard University’s Zaentz Early Childhood Innovation Prize, winning first place in the concept category. Multiple investors interested in innovative approaches to addressing early childhood issues have expressed interest in this concept too, however, they are aware current regulations must be addressed to make this project viable.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut’s young children, and requires immediate action. If pilot programs were created this would open up a variety of infant and toddler spaces throughout high need areas. Ensuring that children are in safe and regulated centers would cut down on the number of illegal centers, and would be more beneficial and safe for children and their parents. This would also pave the way for more individuals to get involved in the childcare industry as the barriers of opening a home daycare will begin to dwindle.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about SB 930 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR MODEL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Maegan Adams