Hello Members of the Education Committee

My name is Denise Harwell, and I have been working in the toddler program at Mount Olive Child Development Center for 20 years and I can’t think of a more important job. We need a state that gives opportunities to parents, the child care workforce and the children in our care. As the cost of living increases, parents with minimum wage jobs cannot afford to pay for quality child care. And child care teachers are forced to use their own money to provide materials for their classrooms, which takes money away from our own bills we struggle to pay. We need a child care and early learning system that works for everyone and makes real investments to support children, parents, and teachers.

Child care is the beginning of a child’s education. When children don’t have the proper foundation they lose out on the social and emotional skills they need to function in society. Higher wages for me would mean I could further my education and not stress out thinking how I will pay for it. It would mean I could pay my bills on time. I would also be able to provide more for my students with better materials. I’m fighting for affordable childcare and decent wages for teachers. Because I believe that no one who works hard in this country should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from. With better pay, we will be able to live a decent life and be there for our own children. We will be able to do our best at work without worrying about keeping our lights on and keeping food in the refrigerator. When we invest in child care, everyone wins—all children will have the opportunity to learn and play in a safe and nurturing environment, parents can get to work, and child care teachers will be paid fairly for the important work we do. Every parent needs quality child care and every child deserves quality care. Its common sense that huge corporations with hundreds of millions of dollars in profits should help there underpaid workers with the services they need to get.
to work every day.

Denise Harwell
Child Care Teacher
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