Testimony regarding: S.B. No. 932 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Submitted By:
Jill Marini

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Jill Marini, and I live in Marlborough.

I am honored to be presenting testimony on the issue of S.B. No. 932 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

This is an issue that is very important to me. I am currently the Regional Director with oversight of five Early Learning Centers and eight Before and After Schools and we are consistently unable to fill and keep qualified teachers.

This needs to be addressed immediately. The constant turnover of teachers is not best practice or healthy for young children. Because the number of open head teacher positions grossly outnumbers the number of qualified applicants there is no feasible way that centers can consistently obtain and keep qualified teachers. Teachers with the proper qualifications consistently take positions in the Early Learning Centers, only to leave after a short time for higher paying positions in the public school or none classroom positions.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut’s young children, and requires immediate action. The ‘win’ for this policy has multiple impacts on Early Childhood Education and Care in CT. First and foremost the ability to fill the open head teachers with educators who will be likely to stay and provide consistency and the opportunity to build relationships with children, which we know as the foundation of learning will increase. This will result in higher quality educational experiences for children. Additionally, having spaces consistently filled by professional educators whom parents are able to work with as a collaborative team in the child’s education will not only benefit the child, but families as well. The impact on Administrators would provide the opportunity to spend less time training a new head teacher every couple of months or having to step into ratio to cover the teacher that has left the program and more time on ensuring that they are providing families with high quality operational and programmatic early childhood programs. The impact of the individual program’s budgets would be a decrease in the cost of hiring and orientating of new staff because of constant turn over and perhaps an increase in the salary of the teachers who are committed to
the programs. This would in turn affect the state budget, as there is potential for the programs to pay their educators a higher wage, resulting in a committed and passionate workforce.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about S.B. No. 932 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS. Thank you for your consideration.