Testimony in Support of:

SB No. 935 AN ACT REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO DEVELOP AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPENSATION SCHEDULE.

Submitted by: Dr. Susan Radway, 19 Magonk Point Rd, Waterford, CT 06385
Organization: Riverfront Children’s Center 476 Thames Street, Groton, CT 06340
Date: March 5, 2019

Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez and members of the Education Committee, my name is Susan Radway, I live in Waterford and I am the Executive Director of Riverfront Children’s Center located in Groton. I am writing in support of 1) SB No. 932 An Act Concerning the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators and 2) SB No. 935 An Act Requiring the Office of Early Childhood To Develop An Early Childhood Educator Compensation Schedule.

As a nonprofit organization, Riverfront’s revenue is dependent on state grants, Care 4 Kids childcare subsidy, parent fees and fundraising. With 96% of the families served receiving tuition assistance, the parent fees make up only 17% of our income. A quality program requires a facility in good repair, well-designed classrooms with a variety of equipment and materials that support learning, AND, most importantly, qualified teachers who are passionate about their work with young children. The cost of operating an early childhood center is high and the revenue dictates what can be repaired, replaced and, in the case of teachers, if a raise can be given. Riverfront employees 22 classroom teachers with salaries ranging from $11.00-$18.73 per hour (average $14.00 per hour); most make under $30,000 a year. Riverfront’s pay scale is on the lower end of comparable centers in southeastern Connecticut, only because that is what the income can support.

For early childhood teachers to earn a living wage, salary standards must be developed. Without pay adjustments, teachers are unable to afford the cost of education required to meet state mandated minimum staff qualifications. The extension of the date to meet minimum staff qualifications must be extended, while the compensation schedule is being researched and developed.