Middlesex Coalition for Children

March 3, 2019

Testimony from Izzi Greenberg, Director, Middlesex Coalition for Children

S.B. No. 933 (RAISED) EDUCATION. 'AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM

Good afternoon Sen. McCrory, Rep. Sanchez, and members of the Education Committee,

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide testimony on this and the other early childhood bills before the committee today. I run the Middlesex Coalition for Children, which works to improve outcomes for children and their families in Middletown and Middlesex County. Our coalition includes a wide range of families, schools, programs, and early care and education programs.

I am testifying on S.B. No. 933 (RAISED) EDUCATION. 'AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM, to expand the eligibility of the Care4Kids program to include families with a gross income of up to seventy-five per cent of the statewide median income and require advance notice of expanded program eligibility.

- Quality early care and education is critical for the healthy development of young children and the ability of parents to participate fully in the workforce
- However, without the Care4Kids subsidy, child care can too expensive for many families. According to the United Way’s report on Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) families, a family of four with two young children needs to earn $78,984 annually just to barely meet a minimum survival budget.
- Child care can easily represent the single largest expense for low-income working families; in 2016, the average annual cost of child care was $19,521, or 28 percent of the median household income for a family of four in 2016.
- However, at 50% of SMI, the current Care4Kids income limit for a family of four is $56,275, well below the income threshold of many ALICE families who still struggle to pay for care. For parents to fully participate in the workforce, and for children to engage in the critical early learning experiences needed for healthy development, we must expand the income eligibility of Care4Kids to enable more low-income families to access Care4Kids.

To get more information on how this affects Middletown, please see our report on Middletown’s Children. ALICE Families make up 4/10 families in our community. These are the folks that are having the hardest time finding quality care for their kids as they don’t make enough to afford care, but too much to receive subsidy.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective,

Izzi Greenberg
Executive Director

Improving the lives of children in Middletown and Middlesex County.