Testimony regarding: S.B. No. 933  AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM

Submitted By:
Sharon Park


I am honored to be presenting testimony on the issue of S.B. No. 933  AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM.

This is an issue that is very important to me. I am a student enrolled and studying in UConn's Early Childhood Development and Education program. I am currently student teaching in a preschool classroom, and hope to become an early childhood educator post graduation. Through my ECDE courses, I know how important childcare is for both families and young children. Childcare however, can be very expensive. This makes it difficult, or sometimes impossible for working parents who need childcare, to be able to afford it. There are families out there who are already struggling enough to provide financially for their family; And childcare can easily be one of the largest expenses for them. I grew up with two hardworking parents who worked full-time to make ends meet, when we first moved to Connecticut. Fortunately, my brother and I were able to be taken care of by a close relative, who had the time and was willing to do so. Not all families have this option available to them, and can really benefit from childcare. I feel as though we can help ease some of this burden by making childcare more affordable and accessible to families.

I believe it is crucial to expand the eligibility for families in the Care4Kids program. This is because there are more people who can benefit from the program, but are not eligible to even apply. According to the events that happened for Care4Kids, from the year 2015 to 2018, Connecticut kept shrinking the pool of eligible families due to federal changes. Families at or below 50% state median income (Priority Group 4), teen mothers (Priority Group 3) and families recently enrolled in TANF (Priority Group 2) become all ineligible for the Care4Kids program. Therefore, the program went from serving 22,957 children to 13,223 children. This is not okay for both the young children and their families. Children should have the right to early childhood care and education, and families should not have to worry about it being unaffordable, or having to make harmful and unfavorable compromises. Childcare is crucial for working families, and makes it possible for them to work and be able to provide for their children and family.
This is an issue that will impact the educational well-being and future of Connecticut’s young children, and requires immediate action. If a policy change is enacted where more families are eligible for the Care4Kids program, then more children and families would be served and have the access to the childcare that they need. This will allow working families to be able to go to work and provide for their family. It will reduce stress for children and their families, knowing that the children are under safe and proper care. It may also help reduce the poverty levels of families in Connecticut, if families are able to work and not spend so much of their income on childcare. Making childcare more affordable and accessible will result in positive outcomes for young children and their families, where they do not have to make any compromises between working and caring for their children.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about S.B. No. 933  AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM. Thank you for your consideration.