Testimony in Support of:
SB No. 937 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

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 SB 937 An Concerning A Student Loan Forgiveness Program for Early Childhood Educators.

Riverfront’s mission is to provide affordable quality early care and education for children. School Readiness Grants, Child Day Care Grant and Care 4 Kids subsidy make up 60% of Riverfront’s income. Combined with private grants, fundraising and donor giving we provide tuition assistance to 96% of our families, assuring that children have the care and education they need to be successful learners and parents have consistent care, allowing them to maintain good work attendance. What we cannot assure is a low teacher turnover rate.

As a nonprofit organization we are paying our teachers as much as our revenue allows. Riverfront employees 22 classroom teachers with salaries ranging from $11.00-$18.73 per hour (average $14.00 per hour). Nine teachers have early childhood degrees from well-respected colleges and universities.

Six of these teachers have student loans totaling more than $350,000. For one teacher, 50% of her salary goes to making the $900 minimum payment allowed on her loans. She has applied for a social worker position at DCF where she would earn better pay with better benefits. Loan forgiveness as proposed in SB 937 would be a strong incentive for this teacher to remain at Riverfront using her early childhood degree for the reason she intended- TEACH!