



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

February 18th, 2020

Testimony of Secretary Melissa McCaw, Office of Policy and Management

In Support of **House Bill 5121 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR GROUP AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES**

Chairs Anwar & McGee, Vice Chairs McCrory & Rochelle, Ranking Members Hwang & Zullo, and honorable members of the Housing Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record in support of **House Bill 5121 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR GROUP AND FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES**. This legislation would eliminate barriers childcare providers currently face in operating licensed group child care homes and family child care homes. Connecticut General Statutes 19a-87b state that " A licensed family child care home shall not be subject to any conditions on the operation of such home by local officials, other than those imposed by the office pursuant to this subsection, if the home complies with all local codes and ordinances applicable to single and multifamily dwellings." This mandate specifically refers to licensed family child care homes, not group child care homes. However, landlords are able to prohibit their tenants from operating a licensed home day care under current state statute. Tenants can even face eviction in these cases. This legislation would clarify existing regulations and establish very necessary protections for these operators.

As the Vice Chair of the Governor's Council on Women and Girls, I was pleased to see **House Bill 5121** proposed this Session. The Council is focused on championing policies that will ensure women and girls across Connecticut have economic opportunities, access to quality education and healthcare, and grow as leaders in both the private and public sectors. The purpose of the Council's Economic Opportunity and Workforce Equity Subcommittee is to *identify financial barriers that disproportionately hinder women and girls, including (but not limited to) pay and work environment disparities that inhibit fair performance evaluation and advancement in the workplace*. **House Bill 5121's** intent matches the Council's mission and was an endorsed concept included in our 2020 Legislative Package.

Nearly 44% of Connecticut's population lives in a 'childcare desert' meaning they do not have access to quality childcare or access is diminished. When Connecticut families can access childcare that is geographically sensible, culturally appropriate, and offers flexible hours, our state gains a more productive workforce and children are given critical support during their developmental years. Additionally, the clarification and enforcement of protections would eliminate the obstacles that these small business owners encounter.

Testimony provided by Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Commissioner Beth Bye highlights a concern with the intent of Section 3. She notes that the language as currently drafted may unintentionally "exempt all licensed group childcare homes from oversight, including those operating outside of a private residence." OEC encourages oversight for any and all childcare facilities. I hope that the Committee considers this concern when drafting final language.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my position and am available should you have any further questions.