

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC  
YALE LAW SCHOOL

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Hon. Saud Anwar, Co-Chair  
Hon. Brandon McGee, Co-Chair  
Members of the Housing Committee

**FROM:** Will Poff-Webster, Community and Economic Development Clinic

**DATE:** February 18, 2020

**RE:** Support for H.B. 5121

---

Dear Chairman Anwar, Chairman McGee, and members of the Housing Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Will Poff-Webster and I am a member of the Community and Economic Development Clinic at Yale Law School. Our clinic has represented All Our Kin to help develop **H.B. 5121, “An Act Concerning Certain Protections For Group and Family Child Care Homes,”** and I am here to urge you to **support H.B. 5121.**

Anyone who’s raised a child while working a job knows that **we have a child care crisis.** We have a child care access crisis: licensed child care is available for less than a third of Connecticut’s infants and toddlers. 44% of Connecticut lives in a child care desert, with little or no access to quality child care. This is a particular problem in suburban and rural communities.<sup>1</sup>

**We also have a child care affordability crisis: annual child care in Connecticut can cost more than college tuition or housing.**<sup>2</sup> Quite simply, many of our residents can’t afford to raise the next generation because child care is out of reach.

**A major solution to this access and affordability crisis is home-based child care.** Community members who start small businesses out of their own homes to take care of neighborhood kids create access to child care close to home at just two-thirds of the price of larger centers.<sup>3</sup> Home-based family and group child care can help fill the child care shortage for 50,000 kids whose families need it but aren’t getting it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Malik, Rasheed et al., “America’s Child Care Deserts in 2018,” Center for American Progress, Dec. 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-care-deserts-2018/>.

<sup>2</sup> Economic Policy Institute, The Cost of Child Care in Connecticut, <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/CT>.

<sup>3</sup> Child Care Aware of America, The US and the High Cost of Child Care: A Review of Prices and Proposed Solutions for a Broken System (2018), <http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/research/costofcare>.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC  
YALE LAW SCHOOL

**Home-based child care can meet Connecticut’s critical child care needs.** Studies show that enrollment in high-quality child care can have a profound effect on outcomes such as the likelihood of enrollment in higher education and juvenile criminal activity.<sup>4</sup> The positive effect of quality child care lasts for years, and is evidenced by advanced cognitive and linguistic skills, improved test scores, and even a higher likelihood of high school graduation.<sup>5</sup> Child care also increases the chance that parents—especially women—can remain in the labor force and contribute to the economy in a career suited to their education and skills.<sup>6</sup> Parents agree that child care has a positive impact on their jobs, their stress levels and physical health, and their relationships both with their spouse and with their child.<sup>7</sup> Home-based child care can serve the most overburdened, under-resourced families, reaching children during their earliest years when that care matters most. Its community-centric model allows parents to place their children in an environment that speaks the family’s language, offers non-traditional hours, or offers care for mixed-age groups that allows siblings to be cared for together.

**All that stands in the way of home-based child care helping to solve the child care crisis is misconceived red tape and obstructionism.** Connecticut passed laws in 1987 and 1990 to reduce these barriers and promote home-based child care, but some obstacles remain. Our clinic has heard heartbreaking stories over the years of livelihoods destroyed and communities denied child care because we lack simple protections for the licensed providers that just want the freedom to take care of kids in their neighborhood.

One of these stories is from an All Our Kin provider in southern Connecticut who operated a licensed child care in her rental home with her landlord’s permission. She moved twice to larger units owned by the landlord to expand her child care business. Each time, she sought and received approval from the State of Connecticut’s family child care licensing agency. She depended on this business as her sole source of income, and relied on the landlord’s promises as she developed relationships with local clients and invested in her business; she even paid to construct a fenced outdoor play area in the yard of her building. The landlord ultimately sought to evict her because of her child care business, despite no indication that it had negatively impacted any neighbors. Not only did one woman have her business and her home upended at the whim of her landlord, but a community of families lost their local child care provider.

**H.B. 5121 can end these impediments from landlords and local red tape** that make our child care crisis worse while hurting child care providers and the families that rely on them. **These**

---

<sup>4</sup> Korjenevitch, Maria and Rachel Dunifon, “Child Care Center Quality and Child Development,” Cornell University College of Human Ecology, 2010, [https://www.human.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/PAM/Parenting/Child-20Care-20Center-20Quality-20-20Development-20Brief\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.human.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/PAM/Parenting/Child-20Care-20Center-20Quality-20-20Development-20Brief_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Kaminer, Debbie, *The Child Care Crisis and the Work Family Conflict: A Policy Rationale for Federal Legislation*, 28 BERKELEY J. OF EMP. & AND LAB. LAW 495, 500-501 (2007).

<sup>6</sup> “Child Care in State Economies,” Committee for Economic Development, Aug. 2015, <https://www.ced.org/pdf/Report%20-%20Child%20Care%20in%20State%20Economies.pdf>, 45.

<sup>7</sup> “Child Care and Health in America,” National Public Radio, Oct. 2016, <https://www.npr.org/documents/2016/oct/Child-Care-and-Development-Report-2016.pdf>, 12.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC  
YALE LAW SCHOOL

**barriers to home-based child care are unnecessary when licensed providers are already rigorously vetted by the Office of Early Childhood.** State licensing, including a 70-item checklist for health and safety, ensure home-based child care has everything from the right usable program square footage for each child's programming, to the appropriate number of adult staff for health and safety.<sup>8</sup> H.B. 5121 places child care decisions where they belong, in the hands of the families who need options and the expert state regulators who ensure those options are high-quality.

The child care crisis is usually silent. Its victims either don't have kids or move away, leaving our communities poorer. **Please listen to those who break that silence today and support a child-friendly future for Connecticut by passing H.B. 5121.**

---

<sup>8</sup> OEC Providers Fact Sheet, <https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2020/01/Checklist-to-Maintaining-Regulatory-Compliance-Center-English.pdf>; Statutes and Regulations for Group Child Care Homes and Family Child Care Homes, [https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2019/03/centers\\_statsregs.pdf](https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2019/03/centers_statsregs.pdf), [https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2019/03/family\\_statsregs.pdf](https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2019/03/family_statsregs.pdf).