

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5213

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM FOR AN

Title: EARLY CHILDHOOD BUSINESS INCUBATOR MODEL.

Vote Date: 3/9/2020

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/6/2020

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

It would authorize the commissioner of Early Childhood to issue a license to a person or group of individuals to operate a family child care home in a space that is not a private home and that has been provided by an association, organization, corporation, institution or agency.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut:

The administration expressed the support of the Governor's Council on Women and Girls for HB 5213 as it addresses specific talking points brought up at council meetings by both employers and employees. First, lack of affordable childcare is an issue that impacts the economic opportunity, workforce equity and health and safety of women and girls which are aspects that they seek to address. The Council finds that women are impacted more negatively than others because of this and they then must resort to less safe options. This legislation would propose more options for licensed childcare facilities in impacted communities.

Second, they identify more economic opportunities for those in the childcare field as well as encouraging women to start businesses in childcare. They note the bill supports the current workforce and encourages expansion.

The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

The Commission writes in support of HB 5213 because it provides a way to close the gap in demand for childcare and would provide more diverse entrepreneurs to provide needed services in the industry. As parental schedules and needs diversify, the childcare market has to do the same, this legislation would make it easier for people to open a child care facility outside of a private residence and provide niche services to cater to cultural needs and parental schedules that do not fit into traditional needs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Maegen Adams, Harwinton Resident

Maegen offered testimony in support of HB 5213. She notes personal experience with difficulty finding quality childcare and how there is a lack of infant and toddler care programs in the state. 92% of children in New Britain do not have access to quality childcare. She notes that not only does this affect the children but also the parents that need to return to work. New Britain has a higher percentage of single mother homes than the rest of the state, meaning that single mothers are disproportionately affected by lack of childcare. The legislation would also increase regulation so that children are safe in the care environment that is chosen for them by their parents. Finally, she states that this legislation promotes entrepreneurship, and would help those, in New Britain specifically, find the resources to open their own childcare businesses in an area where 60% of residents rent.

Wildaliz Bermudez, City Councilwoman, Hartford, CT

Councilwoman Bermudez testified in support of HB 5213 because it supports small business in the state and expands access to affordable childcare. She states that partnering with a public or private entity would aid in the implementation of this legislation. Councilwoman Bermudez identifies three main aspects of this legislation: more childcare business opportunity growth, expansion of childcare access in "structured and reliable" environments and increase the total amount of child care entities. She notes how important affordable and accessible childcare is in a growing and diversifying workforce as needs are unique to everyone.

Elizabeth Aschenbrenner, Coventry Resident

Elizabeth offers testimony in support of 5213 because of the intended effects it would have for family childcare options. Right now, she claims that family childcare, can be isolating, is plagued by high turnover and has recruitment issues. There are also logistical issues including using rental or private properties and proper insurance to protect businesses and children. She supports the use of a pilot program to work through these issues facing family childcare centers now.

Mary Cecchinato, Executive Director, Torrington Child Care Center Inc.

Mary offered support for HB 5213 because it will aim to support entrepreneurship in the childcare business. The language of the bill will allow for family childcare businesses to be opened outside of private homes should they be offered by, "an association; organization; corporations; institution; or agency." The use of these spaces for childcare facilities could help fill the statewide gap in demand for reliable child care centers.

Merrill Gay, Executive Director, Early Childhood Alliance

Merrill provided testimony in support of HB 5213 as it would help to close the gap in infant and toddler care in the state by allowing family child care businesses to open outside of a private residence. He notes that there are only enough licensed infant and toddler care centers to provide care for only 27% of children under three in the state.

Madeline Granato, Policy Director, Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund

Madeline offers support for HB 5213 as it provides support for those looking to start a family child care business who are hindered currently by their living situations or lack of business knowledge. Allowing for a business incubator would support those looking into starting child care businesses and teach them in the process how to manage these businesses on their own. These provisions in turn would work to close the gap in child care demand.

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

The foundation writes their support for HB 5213, as it would greatly impact the Hartford area and the need for child care centers there. They touch on the sentiment that the state has a shortage in child care centers for infants and toddlers and being able to alter the regulations that bar people from starting these businesses would greatly reduce that demand.

Family child care providers serve roughly two thousand children in the Hartford area. Right now, these programs receive funding from the Care4Kids Program but lack critical resources in other areas i.e. professional development. The Hartford Foundation has partnered with the state Office of Early Childhood to provide grants to child care programs in the Hartford area for resources like professional develop, and they have noted the benefits of these services.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed.

Reported by: Lauren Riley,
Asst. Comm. Clerk

Date: 3/13/2020