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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

**Testimony of Beth Bye, Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood
Before the Committee on Children**

**S.B. 87 – An Act Concerning Eligibility for the Office of Early Childhood’s Child Care Subsidy for
Victims of Domestic Violence
Tuesday, February 18, 2020**

Good morning Senator Moore, Representative Linehan, Senator Kelly, Representative Green and distinguished members of the Committee on Children. My name is Beth Bye, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify concerning S.B. 87 – An Act Concerning Eligibility for the Office of Early Childhood’s Child Care Subsidy for Victims of Domestic Violence.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a two-generation family-centered approach in our pursuit of optimal health, safety and learning outcomes for young children. Through our core programs, we support infant and toddler care, preschool, after-school care, child care and youth camp licensing, home visiting, and early intervention to address developmental delays. The Office of Early Childhood is working toward better coordinated, cost-effective services that support Connecticut’s youngest children and families.

We fully appreciate the intent of S.B. 87. Victims of domestic violence are living in an extremely vulnerable situation. Child care provides a parent peace of mind that their child is in a safe and stable place. In 2019, the Office of Early Childhood was made aware of a domestic violence situation where a working parent with young children was denied Care 4 Kids due to residency requirements. The mother secured new housing apart from her abuser, which made her eligible for Care 4 Kids. As a result of access to child care, the parent could take on more work hours and improve her family’s economic stability.

There are many other populations who are on our mind as we set policy, including families with young children experiencing homelessness, teen parents, and children with developmental needs, disabilities or health care needs. As we work to build a more integrated, coherent and inclusive child care system, we will do what we can to increase access for these populations.

The language in SB 87, as written, raises questions about how the Office of Early Childhood would be able to make a determination whether an individual is a victim of domestic violence. There is concern that our agency does not have the expertise or resources to make that determination. We would be happy to further discuss this area of our concern.

Furthermore, we have fiscal concerns about this bill.

Thank you for your time and attention. The Office of Early Childhood is committed to work together – with legislators, the executive branch, providers, advocates and parents - to better serve our families with young children.