

Education Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6558

AN ACT CONCERNING ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF EARLY
Title: CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT.

Vote Date: 3/15/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

PH Date: 3/8/2021

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to establish a program that authorizes the Commissioner of Early Childhood to issue a license to a person or group of persons to operate a family childcare home in a space that has been provided by an association, organization, corporation, institution, or agency.

Section 1: Allows the OEC commissioner to issue family childcare home licenses in FY 22-26 to providers in certain cities who are partnering with another agency for space in a facility.

Section 2: Bill will establish an early childhood educator loan forgiveness grant program administered by the OHE and OEC.

Section 3: Establishes childcare provider tax credit.

Sections 4-7: Extension of Care 4 Kids. Extends Care 4 Kids childcare subsidy eligibility to higher education students and job seekers. Requires the Care 4 Kids subsidy amount paid to childcare providers to be at least 75% of the market rate.

Section 8: Establishes a 13-member early childhood workforce development needs task force.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Beth Bye- Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood:

Section 4 would expand the allowable activities under the Care 4 Kids program, to include public or independent institutions of higher education, private occupational schools, Even Start, and adult education programs. We know that well-structured career pathway based in education and training can support upward economic mobility for low-income families. At the same time, the OEC recognizes that parents face many challenges when they pursue further education or job training – including childcare. This need creates an opportunity to support both parents and children in a Two Generation approach. Although far from a settled matter, recent research suggests that a Two Generation approach can disrupt the cycle of intergeneration poverty for these families and result in better outcomes.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Lina Kronenberger, Donna Labbe, Laiza Meléndez, Connecticut’s Even Start Two Generation Director’s Coalition:

What makes Even Start unique is not only the population we serve, but that we are a nationally recognized two-generation learning program. The funding that Even Start receives helps to create a direct link for parents to training and entry into the workforce and better prepared children. This program is life changing. It works. Parents will tell you how they are better prepared to participate in the workforce, their children are off to a good start, and they are more effective parents.

Representative Kate Farrar, Deputy Majority Caucus Chair, House of Representatives:

Connecticut cannot get back to work if women cannot get back to work. And women cannot get back to work unless there are opportunities to access affordable childcare and the childcare support necessary to complete education and training. Our state can lead a recovery that focuses on fairness and equity. We can advance policies that close the long-standing gender and racial wage gaps with equitable pathways to high-wage and high-growth jobs. These pathways are only possible with the availability of childcare and the wrap-around supports of transportation, healthcare, and affordable housing.

Stephen Anderson, President, Connecticut State Employees Association SIEU Local Izzi Greenberg, Executive Director, Middlesex Coalition for Children

Adrienne Sandiford

Allyx Schiavone, Executive Director, Friends Center for Children

This bill will benefit parents, children, and family childcare providers. From a student loan forgiveness program for early childhood educators to the expansion of Care4Kids, this bill will help providers continue their education while also giving more working parents access to reliable childcare.

Dr. Paige M. Bray, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Hartford

Robin Golia

Stephen Hegedus, President, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Connecticut Chapter

With the tax credit, student loan forgiveness and Sec 7 establishing a task force, this bill places compensation as a distinguishing factor for systemic change at this critical moment in our collective histories. As we see happening today, even essential minimum wage

increases, not education degrees, are causing strain in the early childhood care industry as there is no revenue stream to address pay increases.

Elizabeth C. Brown, Board Member, Riba Aspira Career Academy, Waterbury

Elizabeth Fraser, Policy Director, Connecticut Association of Human Services

Bridgette Gonzales

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

Sierra Ransom

The issue of affordable childcare has been highlighted during this pandemic. Lack of childcare drove over 800,000 women to leave the workforce and others to leave educational institutions and data shows the majority were women of color. We strongly support expanding eligibility for childcare subsidies in the Care4Kids program and know it will make a great difference to close the equity gap in Connecticut.

John L. Cattelan, Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs

Cathy Flynn

Tomas Olivo, Initiative Director, RIBA Aspira, Working Cities Challenge

Karen Pascale, Early Head Start Director, United Way of Greater New Haven

Adiela Rodriguez

Lisa Tepper Bates and Alex Johnson, Co-Conveners, Campaign for Working Connecticut

They support Section 4 of the proposed bill, which would open eligibility for the Care4Kids child care subsidy program to parents who have previously been shut out of the program, Parents in the Even Start program or other Adult Education programs approved by the OEC Commissioner, parents in Job training programs, and parents enrolled in postsecondary education programs.

Julie Clark, Director, CAST Preschool and Childcare Center:

The proposal to forgive student loans for teachers who work in the field for 4 years and the proposal to offer tax incentives are good ones. The problem with them is that many early childhood educators have degrees in different fields. Their unique skills, diverse backgrounds and their love and respect for young children often make them well suited for the job. By offering these incentives to work in the field of early childhood - no matter what higher degree a person has earned - would significantly help to widen the job force, making it easier to hire talented teachers.

Michelle Dent, Professor

Hamish MacPhail, Policy and Research Director, ConnCAN

Christine Miles

Daniel Pearson, State Director, Educators for Excellence-Connecticut

Lynne Skene Johnson, Adjunct Professor, University of Hartford

Cheryl Wheeler

Providing student loan forgiveness is a good start to demonstrating our state's commitment to supporting our early childhood workforce. Establishing a task force to analyze and make recommendations concerning compensation tied to credentialing and competencies is a crucial next step. We need to finally take a stand and tell the early educators of Connecticut that we know how important they are, and we will support them, just like they support the children and families they work with.

Merrill Gay, Executive Director, Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance: Supports the bill but suggests that it be amended to require Care4Kids to pay providers at a rate equivalent to the 75th percentile of the market, as these parents are still priced out of 75% of preschool spaces. Also suggests Section 7 be edited to charge the taskforce with recommending methods to deliver higher compensation to early educators attaining degrees.

Georgia Goldburn, Director, Hope Child Development Center

Susan Radway, Executive Director, Riverfront Children's Center

Edie Reichard, Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care

Support the bill but oppose Section 7, because while it would ensure students in ECE programs a path to higher earning careers, it shuts down the pipeline of workers for the non-public childcare industry and creates a glide path for the existing workforce to enter into the public schools, threatening the existence of private centers.

Marlo Greponne, Executive Director, Human Recourses Agency of New Britain, Inc.

Jessica Powell, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, Southern Connecticut State University

Wendy Waithe Simmons, Executive Director, New Haven Children's Ideal Learning District

This bill will increase recourses to improve the quality of services for children. Early childhood educators who have demonstrated their commitment to underserved communities deserve student loan forgiveness. Connecticut must join the other 48 states that allow low-income parents enrolled in job training or education to receive a child care subsidy.

Glory J. Smith, Executive Director, Morning Glory Early Learning Center LLC.:

Recommends another layer of diverse collaborative stakeholders prior to the task force and its objective, comprised of a grassroots membership that is made up of early childhood systems builders, early childhood educators, childcare businesses, parents and state stakeholders. This intervening layer would be impacted by any and all recommendations for grandfathered credential holders and applicants for any newly constructed early childhood teacher credentialing.

Susan Vater, President of the Board of Directors, Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health:

Asks that a seat be added for CT-AIMH on the task force, as it concerns infants, young children and their family's health, mental health, or healthy development. CT-AIMH is a professional statewide non-profit organization with over 250 members that offers education and expertise in infant and early childhood mental health

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Patrice Farquharson, Executive Director, West Haven Child Development Center:

I vehemently oppose section 7, the creation of a task force that will be charged with making recommendations for a new early childhood teacher license or credential jointly issued by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Department of Education (SDE) Solving the childcare industry's compensation crisis will move C.T. towards a more equitable early care and education system with a robust pipeline of highly qualified workers, which cannot be done without the makeup of those actually in the field. This task force is a death knell for childcare businesses and should not be allowed to advance.

Ronald Goodmaster

Anne Manusky, President, Connecticut Republican Assembly

Connecticut has seen an uptick in issues of children taught to learn over time. Rather than giving them a safe, loving environment these pre-schools are being required to teach the children. It must stop. If Connecticut has quality, reasonably priced, safe, day care opportunities for parents to choose from for those with children under six years of age, and not pushing education, the legislature is providing for families.

Kim Harris: Section 7 of this bill will take away our ability to create legacies that support trust and longevity. Access to business ownership leads to legacy building and a future for our children, our community that represents who we are.

David Kulick, Co-President and Karen Rainville, Executive Director, Connecticut

Association for the Education of Young Children

Tamesha Robinson, Executive Director, CERCLE

For 20 years this legislature has seen bills dealing with the requirement of credentials of early childhood educators, yet nothing has been done to address the appalling low wages of early childhood teachers, so many of whom are people of color. All we have succeeded in doing is putting higher expectations on an undervalued work force. Putting “compensation” language in legislation does not fix the problem. Do not put together yet another group that will place unfunded requirements on this profession.

Reported by: Dallas Emerle

Date: 3/19/2021