



ALL OUR KIN INC.

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN

**Testimony of Christina Nelson: HB 6711
Early Childhood Policy Fellow, All Our Kin
Before the Public Safety and Security Committee
February 17, 2015**

Good afternoon, Senator Larson, Representative Dargan, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Christina Nelson, and I am a Policy Fellow at All Our Kin. We are a nationally-recognized, Connecticut-based nonprofit that trains and supports family child care providers. I'm here today to testify in support of House Bill 6711, AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN POLICE AND CHILD DAY CARE CENTERS.

All Our Kin supports this bill, and we strongly encourage the Committee to include family child care homes explicitly in the bill's final language. There are 2,356 total licensed family child care homes in Connecticut. Each one has the capacity to serve 6 full-time children, plus 3 additional school-age children before and after school – a total potential capacity of almost 20,000 children. Family child care homes are located in neighborhoods across our state, and they care for children at their most vulnerable age. Family child care providers, along with the providers who work in group homes and child care centers, are entrusted with the well-being of Connecticut's children so that they can receive a high quality early education and their parents can enter the workforce. In order to effectively protect the children in their care, providers must have access to real-time information about neighborhood risks that could affect them and the children in their programs.

A sense of safety and security is the foundation for high-quality learning experiences. Research suggests that when children grow up in unpredictable environments in which the threat of danger is constantly present, their experiences have the potential to result in toxic stress that can impact them at a biological level. At All Our Kin, we strive to help family child care providers create the safe, stable environments that children need to thrive, but without the help of state and local police, who can inform providers about real security threats as they arise, providers will not be able to fully protect children from danger and exposure to traumatic situations.

We support the effective communication between police and all licensed child care programs – including child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes. Children should be safe from violence, and this bill is an important step.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.