



Testimony regarding: H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021

Submitted By:

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Good Evening Sen. Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Governor's proposed budget. Specifically I want to address two line items in the Office of Early Childhood budget and one in the State Department of Education Budget:

1. The \$2.7 million cut to the early care and education line item
2. Funding for the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership
3. The \$530,000 cut to After School programs in the Education Department Budget

The Early Childhood Alliance is extremely concerned about the Governor's proposed cut of \$2.7 million in the Early Care and Education line. These are the funds you put into the budget last year to resolve the inequity in funding levels between the Child Development Centers and the School readiness programs and to increase the funding for the full day full year slots by \$100. Child Development Centers and School Readiness programs are both required to meet the same standard of accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children but the CDCs are being paid \$327 less per child per year.

Minimum wage will increase again next September, and the year after, and the year after that. Costs for staff are going up. Child care workers are some of the lowest paid people in the workforce, so with each increase in the minimum wage a larger and larger percentage of the child care workforce will get raises. It has been estimated that by the time we get to \$15 per hour, the cost of providing child care is going to be 30% higher. However, unlike other businesses, childcare can't adapt by replacing staff with robots. Little kids need human interaction so we have staff ratios set in regulation. Unlike other child care programs, the subsidized programs can't generate more revenue through higher tuition because under those programs parents pay on a sliding scale based on their income. That puts the subsidized child care centers in a bind. These programs haven't gotten an increase since 2015 and their costs are going up. I urge you to find the money to restore this cut.



The Alliance strongly supports the increase in funding for the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership in the governor's budget. As you may remember these funds out of the budget last year based on the assumption that the Federal funds were going away. In fact Connecticut won a very competitive federal grant to provide the Head Start wrap around services to infant toddler care in both family daycare and centers. The state funds are needed to support the child care part of the equation.

Finally, many of the children in early care programs have older siblings that rely on afterschool programs until their parents get home from work. Some of those after school programs are run by early care providers. I strongly urge you to find funds to restore the cut in the State Department of Education's budget so that all the kids being served now will continue to have after school programs next year.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.