

Testimony regarding HB 5005, " An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sharon Cloutier and I am the Administrative Manager of a State Funded Child Care Center. TVCCA is one of 102 early care and education child care centers in CT. CDC's have provided quality, affordable early care and education to over 4,300 children in 53 municipalities in CT since 1968. We appreciate the sustained investment the Governor and Legislature has made in helping working families have access to safe, enriching childcare programs. (CT Statute 8-210b)

The Centers form an integral component of the early care and education system. We believe wholeheartedly in high standards for staff and programs and are currently mandated to acquire NAEYC accreditation and our staff must meet standards set by the School Readiness Law.

Oppose Cut to CDC and SR proposed reimbursement rate by 2.7 million The proposed revised budget delays an increase of \$100/per slot to CDC's and School Readiness Program to 2022, this delay is counter intuitive to the recently passed minimum wage bill directed at raising salaries for many low wage jobs. Early Care and Education teachers deserve a raise and to cut the projected increase will make it very difficult for programs to raise salaries. Early Care and Education teachers are an important workforce, critical to Connecticut's economy. Maintaining this small raise in reimbursement rates for early care and education teachers will continue the commitment to high quality programs that children.

Support Parity in Reimbursement Rates for School Readiness Programs and Child Development Centers (CDC's) School Readiness programs and CDC's are both included in the Office of Early Childhood's early care and education umbrella. By law, both have to be NAEYC accredited and teachers have to have an Associates Degree or BA in Early Childhood. To better align the programs, as envisioned by the creation of the Office of Early Childhood, CDC's request parity with the SR reimbursement rates. There is no reason for the lower reimbursement rate. (current reimbursement rates: SR \$8924.04; \$8596.64, full year, full day)

In summary, please support full funding and parity between Child Development Centers and School Readiness programs in this budget. I appreciate your review of this issue and thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely

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