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Testimony Regarding: Governor's Proposed Budget

Submitted By:

Dr. David Stevenson
Central Connecticut Coast YMCA

Good afternoon Sen. Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dr. David Stevenson and I serve as the President & CEO for the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA serving 80,000 residents in Bridgeport, New Haven, and the twenty-five neighboring communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the Governor's proposed budget for the Office of Early Childhood. Specifically, I want to address the \$2.7 million cut to the early care and education line item which funds School Readiness.

- I am extremely concerned about the cut of \$2.7 million from the Early Care and Education line. This represents the \$100 increase per full day full year child care slot that was put into the 2nd year of the budget. Minimum wage will increase again next September so our costs for staff will go up.
- Unlike other businesses, we can't reduce staffing because we have staff ratios set in regulation. Unlike other child care programs, we can't generate more revenue through higher tuition because under the School Readiness program, parents pay on a sliding scale based on their income.
- School Readiness providers have gone years without an increase. That was hard enough with insurance costs going up every year, but minimum wage is really going to have an impact. I urge you to find the money to restore this cut.
- I strongly urge the members of the Appropriations Committee to restore the funding for this very important program. Thank you.