



**Testimony of  
Deborah Monahan, Executive Director, Thames Valley Council for Community Action**  
in regards to  
**H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM  
ENDING  
JUNE 30, 2021**

February 13, 2020 – Appropriations Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, my name is Deborah Monahan and I am the Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action.

**I am here to express my opposition to cuts to school readiness in the Office of Early Childhood budget and the need for additional funds for child care providers across the state.**

For over 55 years, TVCCA has been operating high quality programs that serve the low income throughout Southeastern Connecticut, promoting self-sufficiency and enabling employment. These programs include housing, energy assistance, employment and training, early childhood development and education, WIC, senior nutrition and overall case management with a financial literacy component, including VITA assistance.

High quality early childhood programs prepare the future workforce of this state, ensuring young children are safe while their parents are at work. The new minimum wage increases coupled with the proposed cut of \$2.7 million to Early Care and Education would be crippling to providers. With minimum wage set to go up again in September by an additional \$1.00 (that is a 10% increase), our staff costs are increasing at a fast pace.

Unlike other businesses, child care centers cannot cut staff as mandated staff ratios must be followed to ensure children are safe. The parent sliding fee schedule is set by the Office of Early Childhood, so we cannot increase fees to generate monies. Rising insurance costs, food costs and other center based costs are squeezing providers to the breaking point.

In addition, the Child Development Centers must be funded at the same rate as the School Readiness programs. State funded Child Development Centers are being paid \$357 less per child per year. Yet, we are NAEYC accredited and provide the same identical care as School Readiness programs. That is simply not fair.

Last year, the final budget had devoted funds to provide an increase for the full-day rate for school readiness and child day care center providers.

Unfortunately, the Governor's budget eliminates this increase.

While we are pleased to see there is an acknowledgment to fund private provider increases due to the minimum wage, it is likely not going to keep pace with the costs associated with employee wages and other cost increases.

**The young children of this state are counting on you to support them.**

Thank you.

Deborah Monahan  
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