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February 12, 2020

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Josh Royce and I have the privilege to serve as the District Executive Director for the Woodruff Family YMCA and the Valley YMCA, branches of the Central Coast YMCA. Collectively, the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA has eleven branches along the Connecticut Coastline from the Town of Fairfield to Madison.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today 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.*

As a charitable, tax-exempt, community service organization. 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 strongly urge the members of the Appropriations Committee to restore the funding for this very important program.

Thank you in advance for your time and your service to our great State.

Best,

Josh Royce
District Executive Director
Woodruff Family YMCA & Valley YMCA