

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

My name is Randi McCray and I am an equity consultant and social justice advocate in the State of Connecticut. I am writing in support of H.B. 6659 An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust with some additional modifications for your consideration. This bill, as proposed, will create endowments for children born into poverty. However, it is my strong belief that this benefit needs to be extended to wage earners who have been identified as the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE).

According to The Connecticut United Ways, 38% of households in our state have income which falls below what is needed to pay for basic necessities (United Way, 2020). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, families were bearing a heavy load of inequities that communities of color have been bearing for many generations. The social location of low-income and ALICE families, led to unequal experiences during the pandemic. Without a prioritized investment for these families, the road to recovery for these families will be unequal as well. Conditions prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic are the result of racially motivated public policies that excluded communities of color out of wealth building opportunities. Due to the intentional nature of these exclusionary policies, government institutions have a duty to respond. HB 6659 is a perfect opportunity to create pathways that disrupt generational patterns of poverty and lack of access. I believe, this bill is a step in the right direction to close the racial wealth gap for the most vulnerable families in CT. I also believe this bill can be strengthened to include families in the CT ALICE population. Many families who are working and earning a living wage, are unable to meet the daily cost of living in CT. Further, families in the ALICE population often do not qualify financial supports that will help them become financially stable.

In closing, I urge you to support HB 6659 An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust with the recommendation to extend this benefit to families who are earning income above state and federal poverty guidelines but aren't earning income sufficient to navigate out of financially vulnerable conditions.

Sincerely,  
Randi R. McCray