

Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5279
AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF
Title: EARLY CHILDHOOD.
Vote Date: 3/25/2022
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/4/2022
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Education Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill expands the membership of the Early Childhood Cabinet to include a licensed family child care home provider and a member of a staffed family child care network. The bill also allows a parent member of the cabinet to be reimbursed for time and travel within available appropriations. Additionally, the bill further clarifies the definition of a "family child care home."

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Beth Bye, Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood](#)

"Family Child Care (FCC) providers are a critical element of the early care and education system, and their importance has been heightened during the pandemic as their small group sizes make it easier to follow public health guidelines and allow many parents to feel more comfortable sending their children to this setting. Beyond the temporary COVID-19 implications, family child care providers also provide more flexible hours and offer culturally competent care, both of which are of critical importance to many families of color who are disproportionately likely to work non-traditional hours. They also provide an opportunity to rapidly address the lack of supply of high-quality infant and toddler care in the state. Parents serving on the Cabinet are offering their time and expertise, not in a paid work capacity, and therefore, should be compensated for that time. This proposal allows, not requires, that parents be compensated. Section 1 also removes a penalty for non-attendance at meetings. Attendance at meetings can sometimes be out of a person's control, such as losing access to child care, requirements to stay on the job during scheduled meetings, illness, etc. Section 2 of the bill allows the OEC Commissioner to adjust standards as needed to ensure sufficient

workforce and staffing in School Readiness programs including the Qualified Staff Member (QSM) requirement. Allowing the OEC Commissioner to modify the QSM requirements considers hiring challenges in the early care and education field that may arise from adverse workforce conditions and other circumstances. Section 3 of the bill removes advertising as a youth camp from the definition of a youth camp. This is a technical change. Section 4 would make a technical statutory change to Sec. 17b-749k due to the transition to the new criminal background system at DESPP. The OEC can no longer use the Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing System (COLLECT) and is now using CT Criminal History Records System (CCHRS). Section 5 also is a technical statutory change that removes reference to the date of validity of the early childhood teacher credential."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Subira Gordon, Executive Director, ConnCAN

"Given the positive role early childhood programs have on educational outcomes later in life, ConnCAN supports efforts to modernize, grow and enhance the statute language from the Office of Early Childhood. Over the past two years, the turnover rates and staffing shortages present in the early childhood sector have put undue burdens on centers, educators, families, employers and communities. The impacts for women, people of color and low-income families is even more pronounced. By increasing flexibility in staff, while maintaining high standards of care, Connecticut early childcare centers can begin to right the ship."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Michele O'Neill, Issues Specialist, Connecticut Education Association

"CEA is concerned about section 2 of HB 5279, which provides broad authority to the Office of Early Childhood to set staffing qualifications or standards aside. We believe the proposed unrestricted powers greatly exceed a level of flexibility that could more prudently be provided. Well-trained and properly certified child development educators in pre-school programs ensure sound methods are used to help students develop and grow socially, emotionally, and educationally. Staff qualifications help to ensure that pre-school children under their care are better prepared to begin school socially, developmentally, and ready to learn."

Valerie Stolfi Collins, Executive Director, Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association

"CRPA has concerns with section three of the bill, specifically the removal of the words "advertised as a camp or" as many of our municipal recreational programs are 30 minutes to 3 hours long and are clearly not camps, but rather recreational programs such as, but not limited, to swim lessons, tennis lessons, soccer lessons, and yoga classes. Municipal park and recreation officials have concerns that the proposed change to existing statute may have the unintended consequence of applying a camp definition to these programs."

All other testimony on HB-5279 can be found on the [CGA website](#).

Reported by: Jessica Bucci

Date: 3/28/22