

Appropriations Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6896

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD.

Vote Date: 4/20/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/28/2023

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Appropriations Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

In an effort to examine and address the various childcare needs throughout the state, this bill would create a study that would oversee the adequacy of childcare facilities, the compensation of childcare workers, and find if the state is properly meeting the needs of young children. The information obtained from this study could inform future early childhood related legislation in regard to childcare facilities and employment.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Elena Trueworthy, Deputy Commissioner, CT Office of Early Childhood \(OEC\)](#): Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy testified that while OEC appreciates the intent of the bill to address the needs of childcare facilities, the agency has already made considerable efforts to examine and report on this issue. She explained that the findings inform relief efforts and strategic planning. Ms. Trueworthy shared that Governor Lamont established the Blue Ribbon Panel, a 21-member group responsible for providing a 5-year data-driven strategic plan to support child development, family and business needs, and equitable access to early care and education.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jade Thomas, Policy Associate, All Our Kin](#): Ms. Thomas testified in support of HB 6896, explaining that wages for early educators need to reflect the importance of their work, with center-based providers earning about \$14.00 an hour and home-based providers earning \$8.50 an hour. She testified that stagnant wages and lack of benefits are pushing educators

out of the industry, which is concerning given the already limited childcare availability for young children in the state, therefore, prioritizing the childcare workforce would be crucial for Connecticut's economic recovery. Ms. Thomas emphasized that including diverse perspectives will result in more effective and equitable policies for childcare providers and families.

[Jim Williams, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association](#): Mr. Williams testified in support of HB 6896, stating that early childhood education is essential for children's development and health and pays dividends in the long run. He cited research showing that high-quality early childhood education can improve education, health, social behaviors, and employment outcomes. Mr. Williams also noted that many children spend a significant part of their day in early care and education (ECE) programs, making these settings ideal for building habits that help children grow up healthy. He urged the committee to pass HB 6896, saying it will "invest in our children's future and help them reach their full potential."

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Harold Brown, Connecticut Resident](#): Mr. Brown submitted testimony in opposition of this bill, expressing that he does not believe his tax dollars should be used to pay for childcare, student debt, or school lunches.

Reported by: James Angelopoulos

Date: 4/26/2023