



DATE: March 7, 2022

TO: Education Committee

FROM: Amanda Brenner, Intern, The Alliance

RE: H.B. 5465 An Act Increasing Early Childhood Educator Salaries and Expanding Child Care Opportunities for Families

Representative Sanchez, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Amanda Brenner and I am an MSW student at the UConn School of Social work and the Public Policy Intern at the Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide advocacy organization representing nonprofits. Community nonprofits provide essential services to over half a million individuals and families in Connecticut every year, improving the quality of life in communities across the State.

The Alliance urges you to support H.B. 5465 An Act Increasing Early Childhood Educator Salaries and Expanding Child Care Opportunities for Families.

Nonprofits provide Care4Kids services across Connecticut, and serve the children and families who are part of the Care4Kids program in many other ways. This bill would limit the amount of family copay and increase eligibility to seventy-five per cent of the state-wide median income.

The cost of childcare takes up sixteen percent of Connecticut's median family income. Due to the high cost of childcare families may have to decide between paying for care or paying for other essentials like rent, food, and medication. When individuals are unable to afford childcare, they may have to watch their child instead of going to work. Expanding eligibility for this program would create opportunities for more families to work, look for work, and earn a living without the added financial burden of childcare. The cost of childcare should not place such a financial burden on families or force individuals to choose between caring for their child and their livelihood.

Extending the grant compensation schedule to employees of early childhood care and education programs would greatly improve workforce attraction and retainment outcomes for non-profits that work with children. Many early childhood educators are driven out of a field they are passionate about solely because of meager pay and benefits. 53% of childcare workers in the U.S. receive public assistance.¹ They earn considerably less than teachers of all other ages despite preschool being so critical that it is directly correlated with higher levels of education and earnings, less involvement in

¹ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. (2018). *Earnings and Economic Security*. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/3-Earnings-Economic-Security.pdf> [Report]

delinquency and crime, and fewer chronic health problems²³ 61% of voters think early childcare wages should be raised because of the difficulty of the work and benefit to society. ⁴ To attract and retain top talent, salaries must be equivalent to the worth and value of an early child educator.

We urge you to support these developments that will address a growing workforce crisis. Thank you for your consideration.

² Learning Policy Institute. (2019). *What Does the Research Really Say About Preschool Effectiveness?* Retrieved from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/press-release/what-does-research-really-say-about-preschool-effectiveness>

³ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

⁴ Allvin, R. E. (2020). *Why Aren't We Paying Early Childhood Educators What They're Worth?* Retrieved from <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-02-14-why-aren-t-we-paying-early-childhood-educators-what-they-re-worth>