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# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

David Wilkinson  
*Commissioner*

**Testimony of David Wilkinson, Commissioner  
Office of Early Childhood  
Before the Committee on Children  
Re: HB 5330 – An Act Concerning Homeless Children Enrolling in Child Care  
Tuesday, March 6, 2018**

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Good morning Representative Urban, Senator Moore, Senator Suzio, Representative Zupkus and distinguished members of the Committee on Children. I am David Wilkinson, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify on HB 5330 – An Act Concerning Homeless Children Enrolling in Child Care.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a family-centered and results-driven approach to support young children and their families. OEC integrates early childhood services by providing a unified vision and institutional structure to support increased coordination between programs. Through our core programs, we support access to high-quality early care and education, evidence-based home visiting services for at-risk young families, health and safety assurances, and early intervention and parenting supports to help families address developmental challenges. These changes enable the agency to better support families with young children, within our existing appropriations, as we advance our mission.

The intent of House Bill 5330 would allow a child experiencing homelessness to immediately enroll in an early childhood setting by giving parents 90 days to submit physical examination and immunization records. The Office of Early Childhood proposed this policy in our agency bill that was heard last week before the Education Committee.

Families experiencing homelessness do not always have immediate access to these types of records. Their children are often very young, face a greater risk of experiencing trauma and need stability of child care during this difficult period. Families coming to Connecticut from Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria is a prime example why this 90-day grace period is needed.

Furthermore, the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) new rules require that states must prioritize children whose families are experiencing homelessness for child care services, including providing families with reasonable time to comply with a state's immunization and physical examination requirements. The Office of Early Childhood included a 90-day grace period provision in its current CCDF state plan.

We have two concerns about the language in this bill, as well as the same language that is in our agency bill, HB 5169 – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early

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Childhood. The proposed language only addresses a temporary waiver immunization records. We ask that physical examination records be added to the bill language. In addition, the proposed language, as written in this bill, requires the OEC to adopt regulations to implement this policy change. I caution that the approval process for regulations is lengthy. Without putting this requirement into statute, effective July 1, 2018, Connecticut will be out of compliance with the federal CCDF requirement. We are willing to work with this committee on ensuring the inclusion of physical examination records in the language and that this policy change is made in statute.

Thank you for your time and attention to these proposals. I am happy to answer your questions now and/or at a later date, as well as continue to work together to better serve our families with young children.