



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor
Nancy Wyman
Lt. Governor

Linda Goodman
Acting Commissioner

Testimony of Linda Goodman, Acting Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood
Before the Human Services Committee
Re: HB 7006 – An Act Restoring Oversight of the Care 4 Kids Program to the Department of Social Services and Allowing for the Transfer of Federal Block Grant Funds to the Program
Tuesday, February 7, 2017

Good afternoon Representative Abercrombie, Senator Moore, Senator Markley, Representative Case and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. I am Linda Goodman, Acting Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify concerning H.B. 7006 - An Act Restoring Oversight of the Care 4 Kids Program to the Department of Social Services and Allowing for the Transfer of Federal Block Grant Funds to the Program.

The Office of Early Childhood does not support this bill. While we deeply appreciate the intent of this bill to address the Care 4 Kids fiscal situation and while we are grateful for the support and interest that the General Assembly has taken in this very necessary program, we think there are other ways to accomplish this goal.

The advantages of moving most early childhood services under one state agency was unanimously supported by the General Assembly two years ago. The centralized accountability of the Office of Early Childhood allows for a laser focus on children from birth through age five and their families through unified services, policy, budget, data, and outcome measurement. A singular vision for early childhood leads to better outcomes for children, improved communication with parents, uniform standards for providers, and more informed decision-making by policy makers.

Moving the Care 4 Kids program, professional development, accreditation assistance, the workforce registry, and the child care union collective bargaining agreement to the Department of Social Services will bifurcate early childhood services and create agency silos. Splitting early childhood services between two agencies will result in duplication and inefficiencies. Parents would have to navigate through two different agencies for various early childhood services. Early care and education providers will have to report to two different agencies, further burdening providers and creating two systems.

The new Child Care Development Fund reauthorization changed policies for the Care 4 Kids program, quality, professional development and health and safety requirements. All of these components are linked with work within the Office of Early Childhood, such as licensing, quality improvement, early care and education, and early childhood data.

For these reasons, the Office of Early Childhood respectfully opposes this piece of legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am happy to answer any questions.

Phone: (860) 713-6410 • Fax: (860) 713-7037
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.ct.gov/oec
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