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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

**Testimony of Beth Bye, Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood
Before the Committee on Children
H.B. 5201 – An Act Concerning the Prevention of Heatstroke-Related Deaths
in Motor Vehicles
Tuesday, February 25, 2020**

The Office of Early Childhood respectfully submits testimony concerning H.B. 5201 – An Act Concerning the Prevention of Heatstroke-Related Deaths in Motor Vehicles.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a two-generation family-centered approach in our pursuit of optimal health, safety and learning outcomes for young children. Through our core programs, we support infant and toddler care, preschool, after-school care, child care and youth camp licensing, home visiting, and early intervention to address developmental delays. The Office of Early Childhood is working toward better coordinated, cost-effective services that support Connecticut's youngest children and families.

We fully appreciate the intent of H.B. 5201. This bill focuses on the importance of promoting awareness about preventing heatstroke-related deaths in motor vehicles. There have been devastating situations nationally, and in Connecticut, when a parent unintentionally leaves a child in the car for an extended period of time resulting in the death of the child. According to KidsAndCars.org, over 940 children have died in hot cars nationwide since 1990. It states: "Even the best of parents or caregivers can unknowingly leave a sleeping baby in a car; and the end result can be injury or even death."

The bill requires the Office of Early Childhood to develop a one-page document that provides instruction and best practices on prevention to be posted on the agency website and distributed electronically to licensed child care providers. The document must be posted at early licensed child care programs.

Currently, a one-page document addressing hot weather and poor air quality days, focused on protecting children and staff in child care and youth camp settings, is posted on the agency website under licensing: https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2019/02/hotweather_aq_fact_sheet.pdf This document, prepared by the Department of Public Health, provides tips broadly with one that states: "Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, even if the windows are cracked open."

Thank you for your time and attention. The Office of Early Childhood is committed to work together – with legislators, the executive branch, providers, advocates and parents - to better serve our families with young children.