

1. Name:

Luz Maria Serna

2. Email:

3. Town *

New Haven

4. I am a: *

Please select at most 2 options.

- ☐ Parent
- ☒ Childcare Provider
- ☐ Early Childhood Educator
- ☐ Community Organization
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Advocate
- ☐ Other

5. Type or paste your Testimony here: *

My name is Luz Maria Serna. In more than 20 years working as a Home-Based Child Care Provider, this is the first time I've seen the State of Connecticut truly concerned about early childhood care. While there have been some economic improvements before, they haven't reached us, especially us home-based child care providers, in a fair and equitable way. In my specific case, I haven't received any grants or direct assistance for myself or my business to improve and have the opportunity to offer better services than I currently provide. Everything I have and offer I've done with my own money and effort; I didn't even have access to loans, which were always denied due to complicated procedures and unattainable requirements. We make tremendous efforts to maintain our work and our families, even though an unequal competition has been created between schools and home-based child care providers: Now schools are accepting children from the age of two and a half, and since these children are already potty-trained and families no longer have to pay anything, many prefer to send them to schools. Another situation that deeply affects us is that the Care4Kids program reduces assistance to families whose children turn 3 years old, which increases the family fees, making it very expensive for them and giving them another reason to move their children to places with more resources or lower costs. Because of all this, we have to lower our costs and prices for parents, we have to sacrifice many areas of our homes to give the children more space, and our family privacy is constantly scrutinized during inspections. Furthermore, I consider it unfair that the benefits are unequal between schools, centers, groups, and home-based child care providers. We all do the same type of work, and in many cases, home-based child care providers surpass the quality of care provided by the others mentioned; therefore, the benefit scales should be the same for everyone. Finally, I hope that this time the criteria for distributing the allocated funds, to which we all contribute, will be fair and equitable. Please don't forget about us home-based childcare providers, because when it comes to financially supporting childcare, it seems like we don't exist. Sincerely,

Luz M. Serna.

Family Home Childcare Provider.

DCFH.52602

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