

**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Testimony in Support of
Senate Bill 92, An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Employers That Make Payments Toward
Child Care Costs of Employees**

Children's Committee

February 18, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Anwar, Representative Linehan, Senator Martin, Representative Dauphinais and distinguished members of the Children's Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit testimony **in support of Senate Bill 92, An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Employers That Make Payments Toward Child Care Costs of Employees.**

As part of our efforts to dismantle structural racism and improve social and economic mobility for Black and Latinx residents of Greater Hartford, the Hartford Foundation seeks to increase stable employment opportunities for adults and youth in region facing barriers to employment.

This work recognizes that all residents of our region need access to employment options that provide a sustaining wage. In Greater Hartford, there are a number of job openings, but there is misalignment between the skillsets required and the skills of the current workforce. The Foundation's efforts focus on increasing hiring and retention of residents with significant barriers to employment, including returning citizens and opportunity youth disconnected from school and work. Among students in Greater Hartford's Alliance Districts, our efforts aim to increase employment and career exposure and increase post-secondary degree and credential completion, including 2Gen approaches that focus training, childcare and other supports to the needs in families. The Foundation's work also includes job creation for Black and Latinx residents through locally owned small businesses and increasing access to capital for Black and Latinx small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Public commitment must address the interplay of basic human needs including access to food, mental and physical health care services, housing and other needs, and provide adequate support to the nonprofit organizations providing these services.

Since 1987, the Foundation has invested more than \$40 million in early childhood development in the Greater Hartford area. It is our goal to ensure that all children, especially those most vulnerable, have access to high quality early childhood experiences. The Foundation has supported early childhood policy, funding, and program quality, recognizing their importance in ensuring optimal safety and learning outcomes for children and pathways to economic security for their families and caregivers.

The Foundation offers its support of Senate Bill 92, An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Employers That Make Payments Toward Child Care Costs of Employees. We appreciate the legislature's recognition of the vital role child care plays in supporting working families and applaud this effort to incentivize employers who support child care for their employees.

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Unfortunately, many residents most in need of support for child care services work in low paying jobs and their employers are not likely to offer financial support for child care. To that end, the Hartford Foundation encourages the legislature to support legislation to expand access to the state's Care 4 Kids child care subsidy. For many working families, access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality child care is a necessity to attain and maintain a job, as well as to foster the learning and development of their young children. Care4Kids is a critical program that ensures working parents can access safe, high-quality child care. We encourage lawmakers to also ensure that parents pursuing education or training are also eligible for Care 4 Kids to support their efforts to increase their earning potential and help families exit poverty and reach greater self-sufficiency.

The Foundation also encourages legislators to allocate additional support for home-based family child care centers that are key to solving the dire shortage of child care for infants and toddlers, care that is linguistically and culturally appropriate as well as available during nontraditional hours. Many of these home-based child care providers have ceased operations after losing business during the COVID shutdown. These providers were already faced with significant barriers, everything from a lack of basic business skills to property owners and condominium associations that do not allow home-based businesses.

Family child care providers play a vital role in ensuring the health and safety of many of our youngest children, and provide access to affordable child care to thousands of working families throughout the state. We encourage the state to offer a pool of state funding that could be used to enhance these providers' capacity to successfully run their businesses and provide high-quality, culturally-appropriate care for children of working families.

The Foundation is eager to partner with legislators, advocates and businesses to eliminate barriers to employment for Black and Latinx residents to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate in the workforce and achieve economic stability, and have opportunities to thrive and enhance Connecticut's economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at policy@hfpg.org or 860-548-1888.