

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5003

AN ACT CONCERNING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Title: FUND.

Vote Date: 3/6/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/4/2025

File No.:

Disclaimer: *The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

Disclaimer: *The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

CO-SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Matthew Ritter, 1st Dist.
Rep. Jason Rojas, 9th Dist.
Rep. Julio A. Concepcion, 4th Dist.
Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.
Rep. Corey P. Paris, 145th Dist.
Rep. Nick Gauthier, 38th Dist.
Rep. Rebecca Martinez, 22nd Dist.
Rep. Trenee McGee, 116th Dist.
Rep. Robin E. Comey, 102nd Dist.
Rep. Anthony L. Nolan, 39th Dist.
Rep. Marcus Brown, 127th Dist.
Rep. Kate Farrar, 20th Dist.
Rep. William Heffernan, 115th Dist.
Rep. Brandon Chafee, 33rd Dist.
Rep. Kara Rochelle, 104th Dist.
Rep. Eilish Collins Main, 146th Dist.
Rep. Mary Welander, 114th Dist.
Rep. Sarah Keitt, 134th Dist.
Rep. Fred Gee, 126th Dist.
Rep. Dominique Johnson, 143rd Dist.
Rep. Hector Arzeno, 151st Dist.
Rep. Nicholas Menapace, 37th Dist.
Rep. Amy Morrin Bello, 28th Dist.
Rep. Travis Simms, 140th Dist.

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

HB 5003 aims to strengthen Connecticut's workforce development system by increasing access to job training, education, and career support services. It establishes a statewide workforce strategy that prioritizes alignment between educational institutions, employers, and state agencies to address labor market needs. The bill seeks to expand apprenticeship opportunities, support underrepresented communities in accessing high-demand jobs, and enhance data collection to monitor workforce trends and program outcomes. It also provides funding for career training programs and partnerships with employers to improve job placement rates and economic mobility for Connecticut residents.

This bill hopes to strengthen the states workforce by using the early childhood care and education fund; this is slightly different than the Governor's plan which allocates up to \$300 million annually for universal preschool, while HB 5003 directs up to \$100 million over two years to expand Care4Kids, increase workforce support, and improve health plan access. The Governor's proposal emphasizes long-term sustainability, while HB 5003 focuses on immediate relief and expanding access.

HB 5003 intends to solve urgent childcare needs while also laying foundation for long-term improvements.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, Commissioner, Beth Bye](#): supports this bill and supports maintaining the Child and Adult Food Program under the State Department of Education and expressed concerns about the complexity and funding challenges tied to the kindergarten preparatory academy and early childhood licensing expansions proposed in S.B. 6. Regarding H.B. 5003, OEC raised concerns about long-term sustainability if 90% of funds are spent annually and suggested that the Governor's Universal Preschool Endowment offers a more stable funding model for early care and education.

[Connecticut Office of Policy & Management, Secretary, Jeffrey Beckham](#): opposes this bill for several reasons they argue that the bill's approach to funding early childhood care and education is financially unsustainable. Unlike the Governor's bill which caps annual expenditures from the fund at 10% to ensure long-term solvency, HB 5003 allows up to 90% of the fund to be spent each year, risking depletion of resources if surplus revenue fluctuates. Second, the bill would require ongoing funding for wage increases, health care subsidies, and facility grants, creating a long-term financial commitment that may not be supported by future surpluses. Finally, Section 10's commitment to \$100 million in bond funding over five years

would increase the state's already high long-term liabilities, putting additional pressure on existing state programs and the budget.

[Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller, State Comptroller, Sean Scanlon:](#) supports this bill and explains how the bills provides a health insurance subsidy for early care and education workers, similar to the successful Paraeducator Subsidy Program. He states it would help address the state's childcare crisis, where low wages and high costs have left over 40,000 positions unfilled and cost the state \$1.5 billion annually. Passing the bill would show that the state values childcare workers and is committed to strengthening the sector.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[HDO, State Representative Kate Farrar:](#) supports this bill and expands access to affordable childcare in Connecticut by increasing Care 4 Kids eligibility to 85% of the state median income and providing temporary 60-day childcare assistance while applications are processed. It raises provider rates to improve educator pay and offers health insurance subsidies through Access Health CT. The bill also allocates \$100 million in state bonds to build and renovate childcare facilities, increasing capacity. These investments aim to support families, strengthen the workforce, and improve long-term outcomes for children.

[Colorful Little Butterflies LLC, Owner, Trisha A Brown:](#) supports this bill and reminds that the state is at a critical moment in providing early childcare, they go on to explain the need for funding and how the funding would affect them. They urge passage of the bill.

[Owner & Director, Anonymous:](#) supports this bill and says that they have run a family center since 2001, and although they have been successful – funding is needed for renovations and other things; they add that they wish there was more resources for them.

[Sol Playschool LLC, Owner & Director, Silvia Arnoso:](#) supports this bill and the need for more funding for childcare centers. They give details into their own center and urge passage of the bill.

[Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, President & CEO, Timothy Bartlett:](#) supports this bill and add that it makes childcare more affordable. By increasing eligibility and making childcare more assessable and affordable.

[Child and Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut, Chief Financial Officer, Lisa Baxter:](#) supports this bill and urges for essential investments into the childcare infrastructure. They add that his bills funding is not only a necessity but an investment into the future for our children.

[Laura's Little One, Owner, Laura Benjamin:](#) supports this bill and adds that an investment is critic for proving physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children of Connecticut.

[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Yamirian Bonifacio:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Elizabeth Dominguez:](#)

[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Tamika Keith:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Brigida Mendieta:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Maria Ortega:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Adelia Patino:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Maria Reyes:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Miledys Rivera](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Morayma Rosario:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Jacqueline Ulloa:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Iris Velazquez:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Jeaneth Yepez:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Alexandra Ayavaca:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Angelica Cervantes:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Kiobenit Grullon:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Reina Guzman:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Santa Hernandez:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Rhonda Knowles:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Jeannine Lewis:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Santa Martinez:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Natalie Moore:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Cruz O'Neal:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Alondra Serrano:](#)
[CSEA SEIU Local 2001, Childcare Provider, Maribel Ventura:](#)

Supports this bill and they highlighted its potential to improve financial stability and support for childcare providers. They emphasize the importance of health insurance access, which would greatly improve their well-being, and praise the bill's provision for presumptive approval, which would prevent financial loss while waiting for Care4Kids decisions. They also stress the need for funding to improve childcare facilities, such as repairing a damaged backyard fence to create a safer environment for children. The bill would create a more equitable and stable childcare system, benefiting both providers and families.

[Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA, Executive Director, Andrew Bramlett:](#) supports this bill and its intent to enhance affordability and accessibility of childcare in the state.

[A Child's World, Director, Debra Buster:](#) supports this bill and the critical need for improvements to maintain and enhance childcare. They mention immediate facility needs such as safety upgrades, sidewalk repairs, building stucco repairs, and bathroom upgrades.

[Teresa Camarena:](#) supports this bill and states that this bill offers real solutions for expanding and investing into childcare assistance, facilities, and educators.

[Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs, Vice-President Government Relations, John L. Cattelan:](#) supports this bill and commends them on multiple sections on the bill. They add that the childcare workforce crisis remains a major challenge and that reimbursements remain vital incentivization.

[LISC, National Program Director, Bevin Cerkez:](#) supports this bill and urges passage for upgrades to critical infrastructure for early care facilities. They add that this bill helps with leveraging public and private investment, funding for all project states and technical assistance. And a variety in projects and access for all providers.

[Lisa Chatman](#): supports this bill and mentions their firsthand experience of the challenges affording and accessing childcare. They state that childcare is an economic and family issue and they support creating a sustainable funding source from the state's general fund.

[Melody Davis](#): supports this bill and adds that the bill provides real solutions.

[Little Friends LLC, Director & Owner, Verna Esposito](#): supports this bill and gives details of their own program in Greenwich. They add that if you reinvest into teachers, families, and children you have a better way to make a living and a lifelong impact on Connecticut citizens.

[Belen Fiallo](#): supports this bill and investing in early childcare.

[CT Early Childhood Alliance, Executive Director, Gay Merrill](#): supports this bill not as a replacement for the proposal from the governor but as a compliment to it. He adds that the Governor's bill doesn't address the care need for parents who work until 5 PM or for infant toddler care.

[Mindy Gold](#): supports this bill and adds that HB 5003 is an important first step as she says that the childcare sector is a market failure and the only solution is public investment.

[United Way of Southeastern CT, President & CEO, Dina Graves](#): supports this bill and adds this it makes strong progress towards affordable and accessible childcare. They add that this will strengthen the economy and increase ass to higher quality care. They urge passage.

[Three Little Bears Day Care, Director Owner, Alina Gutierrez](#): supports this bill and asks for passage to help support infrastructure that desperately needs new investments.

[Tracey Hennessey](#):

[Valeria Hernandez](#):

[Safia Iqbal](#):

[Michelle Lugo](#):

[Maris Morel](#):

[Shakeera Nelson](#):

[Brenda Ocampo](#):

[Leah Pepe](#):

[Tania Pimentel](#):

[Hali Roberston](#):

[Janeth Siguenza](#):

[Anne Sousa](#):

[Carmen Tacuri](#):

[Rosario Ucanan](#):

[Letitia Young](#):

[Anissa Zucker](#):

[Lourdes Batista](#):

[Laura Benjamin](#):

[Carmen Lucia Bradley](#):

[Little Butterflies](#):

[Xiomara Campos](#):

[Lidia Castro:](#)
[Rosa Conteras:](#)
[Tashi Drakes:](#)
[Gina Federico:](#)
[Queen Freelove:](#)
[Ann Horton:](#)
[Alba Jimenez:](#)
[Yvonne Lufuluabo:](#)
[Santa Hernandez:](#)
[Laura Olano:](#)
[Sonia Pabon:](#)
[Michael Pfarr:](#)
[Alexandra Ruiz:](#)
[Husien Salama:](#)
[Virginia Sharene:](#)
[Lucia Silva:](#)
[Davette Stephens:](#)
[Troy Taylor:](#)

Supports HB 5003, they say it will make childcare more affordable and accessible while improving support for early childhood educators. The bill raises income eligibility for childcare assistance, increases wages and health care subsidies for providers, and funds facility improvements. They argue that investing in childcare strengthens families, supports the workforce, and benefits the state's economy.

[LISC CT, Senior Executive Director, Jim Horan:](#) supports this bill and urges the investment in infrastructure to early care facilities, and to create quality spaces for toddlers and infants in our state.

[Bakers Half Dozen Day Care, Owner, Amy Lewis:](#) supports this bill and the investment that the early childcare system needs. They mention how they run their day care out of their home and it needs constant repairs – this bill would help alleviate some of the burden. They urge passage of the bill.

[North Hartford Partnership, Patrick McKenna:](#) supports this bill and reminds the many challenges in preserving existing spaces for childcare and that this bill would help alleviate some of that difficulty and uncertainty. They say with continued questions on federal funding going forward it is important for the state to step up.

[Good Day Family Child Care LLC, Owner, Claribel Pallasco:](#) supports this bill and gives a personal story on the ARPA-funded early child care grant program that helped her improve her child care center.

[Waterbury School Readiness, School Readiness Liaison, Krista Pisano:](#) supports this bill and says that we need to start fixing our childcare in the state. She urges to think of all the children, families and business that would thrive because of this bill.

[Sleeping Giant Day Care Inc., Director, Edie Reichard:](#) supports this bill and the progress it makes in providing affordable and high quality childcare to the state. He supports this bill for expanding funding and the bond funding to renovate current buildings throughout the state.

[Central CT Coast Y Stratford, Executive Director, Suzanna Richards](#): supports this bill and the actions it would take to strengthen the state's economy and provide higher quality childcare and education. She adds the allocation of state bonds towards construction and renovation increasing childcare slots.

[Northern Middlesex YMCA, President & CEO, Michele Rulnick](#): supports this bill but has concerns over section 13 which caps total payments for providers that operate more than 10 childcare centers under the childcare subsidy program.

[The CT Project Action Fund, Policy and Advocacy Strategist, Coralys Santana](#): supports this bill and increasing investment in Connecticut's child care sector by prioritizing a long-term child care fund from surplus revenue and addressing the \$110 million ARPA fiscal cliff. It endorses expanding Care4Kids eligibility to 85% of the state median income (SMI) and raising subsidy rates to reflect the true cost of care, with bonuses for providers in high-need areas. It also supports \$100 million in bond funding over five years for childcare facility improvements, including innovative models like child care incubators and microcenters.

[Valley Shore YMCA, CEO, Tony Sharillo](#): supports this bill urges to make childcare more affordable and accessible. They as that the bill passes.

[All Our Kin, Policy Specialist, Jade Thomas](#): supports this bill and adds that this would allow for a long-term investment into the children, families and early educators of our state. They go over what is in the bill as well.

[Cercle and Childcare for CT, Owner, Francheska Velaquez](#): supports this bill and alerts that the childcare system in the state is at a breaking point as families across the state are struggling to make ends meet. They add the firsthand experience of what the lack of funding does to families and caregivers. They urge for passage of the bill.

[American Heart Association, CT Government Relations Director, Jim Williams](#): support this bill and support the increase in funding and incentives.

[United Way of Southeastern CT, President, Dina Graves](#): supports this bill and adds that this bill would increase access to high-quality, affordable childcare and provide financial stability.

[Bristol Child Development Center, Executive Director, Maegan Adams](#): supports this bill and adds that we must invest in our states future by addressing access and affordability to child care. They also add that this bill strengthens our workforce modernizes our childcare infrastructure.

[Julia Day Nursery, Executive Director and Parent, Shannon Bullard](#): support this bill and add that we should strive for continues improvement and not to penalize small providers for small issues. They add that we should be working together for the safety of children.

[Connecticut Voices for Children, Emily Byrne](#): supports this bill as an ambitious but overdue investment in the childcare and education of our state and they urge passage of the bill.

[Torrington Child Care Center, Executive Director, Mary Cecchinato](#): supports this bill as a piece of strong legislating that begins to fix child care in Connecticut. They add this brings strong support to children during their most important stage of development.

[Children's Center, Executive Director, Lisa Dahn](#): supports this bill and urges passage to invest in early child care facilities and to expand access to greater quality spaces for infants and toddlers.

[West Haven Child Development Center, Inc, Executive Director, Patrice Farquharson](#): supports this bill and advocates for expanded access and quality spaces for early child care.

[YWCA Hartford Region, Sr. Director of Early Learning, Tina Gladden](#): supports this bill and adds the firsthand experience of the success of targeted support. And that this bill has the opportunity to help the most vulnerable community members.

[CBIA, Public Policy Associate, Jenna Grasso](#): comments that the business community believes in expanding child care however, they are skeptical because diverting \$100 million from the Budget Reserve Fund to support child care would reduce available pension funding, which could otherwise generate \$8.5 million in annual savings—nearly matching the proposed \$10 million annual child care fund allocation. They suggest maintaining pension funding and instead using the annual pension savings to support childcare initiatives.

[SECT Childcare Collective, CI Project Manager Childcare, Kathleen Hollister](#): supports this bill and urges passage as it will benefit children, families, and businesses.

[Montessori School on Edgewood, Director of Ed. & Operations, Cecile Malm](#): supports this bill adds that funding will increase slots and teaching staff and help to hire more qualified teachers. They add this will help them to provide quality childcare.

[Bloomfield School Readiness, School Readiness Liaison, Gail Nolan](#): supports this bill and mentions that it is very important for providers and families as it would start fixing childcare in Connecticut. They urge your support and passage.

[Rocio Family Daycare LLC, Owner, Rocio Pena](#): supports this bill.

[Little Scholars Learning Academy, Owner Director, Jessica Pineda](#): supports this bill and the investment into critical infrastructure of early childcare. They add the importance of adding quality spaces for children.

[Mansfield Discovery Depot, Executive Director, Debbie Plourde](#): supports this bill and adds that inadequate spaces can be detrimental to growth and development and can hard the future of our state. They urge passage of the bill to invest in our critical infrastructure.

[Action Early Learning Center, Childcare Director, Mini Santosh](#): supports this bill and warns that if childcare fails so does our economy. They say without state funded programs low-income and middle-income families would greatly suffer and many would not be able to work. They urge passage of the bill.

[Hartford Foundation, Sr. Public Policy Officer, Chris Senecal:](#) supports this bill and is pleased to see the recognition of the need to invest in childcare. They support competitive grant programs and support for early childhood educators.

[She Leads Justice, Policy Director, Tonishia Signore:](#) supports this bill and the initial steps of HB 5003 they also ask for a pay raise study to ensure providers receive equitable compensation, reimbursement and tuition transparency, data sharing, and studies on rising liability insurance.

[Wheeler Regional Family YMCA, School Age Director, Emily Snow:](#) supports the bill besides Section 13 which caps total payments for providers operating more than 10 childcare centers under the childcare subsidy program.

[Greater Dwight Development, Executive Director, Linda Maier Townsend:](#) supports this bill and adds that our state needs to increase care slots as the demand for them increases.

[Northwest CT YMCA Childcare, Family Services Director, Jana Viets:](#) supports this bill and reviews the positives they find in the bill. They urge support.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, District Operations Director, Ryan Leworthy:](#) appreciates the intent but opposes this bill particularly in Section 13 which caps total payments for providers that operate more than 10 childcare centers under the childcare subsidy program. They say that this would negatively impact poorer areas of the state.

Reported by: Christian Talarski

Date: 3/20/2025