



**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Testimony in Support of**  
**Senate Bill 1400, An Act Concerning A Child Care Services Loan Program**  
**Banking Committee**  
**March 4, 2025**

Good afternoon Senator Miller, Representative Doucette, Senator Berthel, Representative Delnicki and distinguished members of the Banking Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **Senate Bill 1400, An Act Concerning A Child Care Services Loan Program. Fundamentally, we support the critical need to support working parents in meeting childcare costs. As a first priority, we support providing state resources to mitigate childcare expenses but appreciate that this legislation explores providing an affordable loan option parents may need.**

Since 1925, the Hartford Foundation has proudly served as the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region. This year, the foundation celebrates 100 years of service and remains committed to building an even greater Hartford region. Over the past two years, we have distributed more than \$100 million in grants to promote equitable opportunity for all residents in our region. Made possible by the gifts of generous individuals, families and organizations, the foundation has awarded grants of more than \$1 billion since its founding.

As part of our strategic work, the Hartford Foundation seeks to increase stable employment opportunities for Black and Latine adults and youth facing barriers to employment. In Greater Hartford, there are a number of good paying jobs available, but access to affordable, quality childcare remains a barrier for many working parents. The foundation's efforts focus on preparation, hiring and retention of residents with significant barriers to employment. This work includes 2Gen strategies that take a family-centered approach and consider childcare and supports for both the parents and children, allowing parents to focus on their education and job training.

One of the foundation's initial workforce development efforts was the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) that integrated education programs, support services, and career development to assist adult learners and expand their academic and job skill levels as a way of reaching self-sufficiency. CPI included an extensive evaluation of its various programs and outlined some of the challenges and success of the initiative. **One of the key findings was that childcare was the most frequent and costliest barrier to address.** While several of the CPI programs included support for childcare, it ultimately remained a significant barrier to employment.

Ensuring that all children, especially those most vulnerable, have access to high quality early childhood experiences is a critical step to removing this barrier to employment. Since 1987, the foundation has invested more than \$40 million in early childhood development across the Greater Hartford area. The foundation has supported early childhood education 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. Part of our early work included convening local



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childcare providers to support licensing and organizational development. In addition, as part of its COVID response efforts, the foundation awarded financial support to childcare providers, including assistance in applying for federal Paycheck Protection Program funds.

The foundation supports Senate Bill 1400 which directs the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) to create a new loan program designed to help individuals manage the high cost of childcare and access quality services. This program would provide low-interest loans of up to \$5,000 per borrower, with a lifetime maximum borrowing limit of \$25,000. We recommend fully considering the interest rate and maximum borrowing limit for the program to avoid low-income and working families incurring debt that makes it difficult to manage financing a home or college for their children and achieving other goals. The foundation supports the legislation's stipulation that the loan program provides income-based repayment options to make the loans more flexible and accessible. By offering affordable, low-interest loans with income-based repayment options, this proposal reduces financial barriers that might prevent parents or guardians from accessing quality childcare. We also recommend that CHEFA share plans and consult with Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood and the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity, who work closely with working parents, as it structures the new program. This will help ensure the program will attract parents and the loans will be manageable as intended.

We appreciate the legislature's recognition of the vital role childcare plays in supporting working families and the need to support and enhance our existing childcare system to ensure that all Connecticut families have access to quality, affordable childcare.

The foundation is eager to partner with legislators, advocates and businesses to eliminate barriers to employment for Black and Latine residents to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate in the workforce and every family has access to quality affordable childcare.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at [policy@hfp.org](mailto:policy@hfp.org) or 860-548-1888.