Testimony before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee in Support of
S.B. 876 AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES.

March 15th, 2019

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas, Senator Witkos, Representative Davis and members of the
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 876 An
Act Authorizing And Adjusting Bonds Of The State For Capital Improvements, Transportation And Other
Purposes.

My name is Kayla Goldfarb and I am a Policy Analyst for the Connecticut Association for Human Services
(CAHS). CAHS is a statewide nonprofit that works to reduce poverty and promote equity and economic success
for children and families through both policy and program initiatives. CAHS wishes to express our particular
appreciation for Sec. 50 of this bill, which would expand subsection (b) of Sec. 10-508 of the General Statute to
enable the Office of Early Childhood to use the proceeds of the sale of bonds to provide for facility improvements
to school readiness programs, state-funded day-care centers (CDCs), Even Start programs, programs administered
by local and regional boards of education, and to expand the delivery of child care services to infants and toddlers
where a demonstrated need exists.

As it stands, the General Statutes offer up to $10 million annually in bonding to OEC, available only to Smart
Start programs. Expanding bonding to other programs beyond Smart Start could free up important funding to
support facility improvements in early childhood care and education programs around the state, and would help
address our state’s serious shortage of licensed, affordable, family-accessible child care. Across the state, 44% of
people live in a “child care desert” where there is little or no access to quality child care.1 This is a workforce
issue, as well as a child-safety issue, as the lack of accessible, affordable child care means that many parents are
pulled out of the workforce, or that children are placed in unregulated care.

According to OEC, Connecticut needs 51,000 more infant and toddler child care slots, including 30,000 more
subsidized slots. Several issues make it less economically feasible for providers to operate infant and toddler
classrooms, contributing to the profound shortage of regulated care for our youngest children. Because
center-based infant and toddler classrooms are subject to higher child-staff ratio regulations, they are more
expensive to run than preschool problems. Additionally, the Care4Kids program reimburses infant and toddler
providers at the 4th percentile of the market rate, well-below the federally recommended 75th percentile of market
rate. Finally, because infant and toddler rooms require particular set-up with changing tables and other
age-appropriate facilities, child care providers may lack the financial incentives necessary to open up new infant
and toddler classrooms.

Grant funds from the OEC could dramatically curb the costs to providers associated with renovating an empty
classroom, or expanding existing facilities, and could offer the economic incentive they need to boost the supply

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1 Rasheed Malik and Katie Hamm, “Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts” (Washington: Center for American
Progress, 2017)
of regulated infant and toddler slots. Meanwhile, facility improvements to school readiness programs, CDCs, and Even Start programs could support the quality of these critically important sources of quality child care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 876 An Act Authorizing And Adjusting Bonds Of The State For Capital Improvements, Transportation And Other Purposes.