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Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Amelia Bernard. I am a Teaching Assistant Director of a Special Purpose Preschool and Childcare and live in Windham.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. As a 22 year veteran in the early childhood special education field I am paid significantly less than my elementary and secondary teaching colleagues. The monthly supplement has allowed some wiggle room and allowed me to begin saving a bit aside for the first time since I graduated from my master's program. As an individual responsible for hiring new employees in our workforce, it adds an additional incentive for people to choose careers in this low paying field as we can afford to offer starting wages similar to retail employees with far less stress!

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. Research has proven time and time again that the earlier we provide children (and their family's support), the better their outcomes. Offering quality childcare and education to children from families who otherwise could not afford that levels the playing field for children as they enter their elementary years.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. When we heard about this program many of our teachers anticipated a sigh of relief. Despite applying the moment they were allowed, all were placed on a waitlist. This incredibly supportive opportunity to teachers' and programs' was dangled, has been significantly delayed and now might be taken away before the benefits are provided.