



Connecticut Association for Human Services  
237 Hamilton Street, Suite 208  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
www.cahs.org

Elsa Núñez, President  
James Horan, Chief Executive Officer  
860.951.2212  
860.951.6511 fax

## Testimony before the Human Services Committee

March 13, 2018

### S.B. No. 437 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A TWO-GENERATIONAL INITIATIVE

Good morning Senator Markley, Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Liz Fraser, and I am the Policy Manager for the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS). A statewide nonprofit that works to promote economic success for children and families through policy and program work, CAHS appreciates the opportunity to testify in full support of H.B. No. 437, An Act Concerning a Two-Generation Initiative. It is our position that the language included in this bill strengthens the two-generation initiative and helps to give clear direction for moving forward with cross-agency collaborative partnerships that serve families as a whole. As such, we wish to commend the Human Services Committee for working to improve data-sharing and collaboration between local and state public sector agencies and private sector entities involved with two-generational academic achievement and workforce development initiatives.

Emerging scholarship emphasizes the importance of two-generational initiatives that specifically ensure children and adults in the same household receive targeted services, track and foster accountability for shared outcomes for children and adults, and incorporate stakeholders in both education and workforce development.<sup>1</sup>

The economic well-being and stability of parents is essential for children's early development and long-term social-emotional, physical and mental health outcomes, educational attainment,<sup>2</sup> and future earnings potential.<sup>3</sup> The conditions of low-wage work and poverty, which may be intensified by a lack of paid parental leave, unpredictable and non-standard scheduling<sup>4</sup>, reduced access to educational training opportunities, reduced parent-and-child quality time, and increased parental-stress and morbidity, can negatively impact the development of young children.<sup>5</sup> The ability of parents to progress toward greater economic stability is through workforce development, education, and training is dependent upon the well-being of their children.

---

<sup>1</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014). Two-Generation Programs in the Twenty-First Century. *The Future of Children*, 24(1), 13-39. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23723381>

<sup>2</sup> Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., ... & Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics*, 129(1), e232-e246.

<sup>3</sup> Ascend at the Aspen Institute, Two Generations, One Future: Moving Parents and Children Beyond Poverty, The Aspen Institute, 2013, <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/ascend/Ascend-Report-022012.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Joshi, P., and Bogen, K. "Nonstandard Schedules and Young Children's Behavioral Outcomes Among Working Low- Income Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69 (2007)

<sup>5</sup> "Working Conditions and Parents' Ability to Care for Children's Preventive Health Needs." *Journal of primary care & community health* (2013); Alina Salganicoff et al.; Women and Health Care in the Early Years of the Affordable Care Act, 2014, Kaiser Family Foundation.

Implicit in this bill is a desire to increase efficiencies and improve the cost-effectiveness of family-facing state agencies and systems. At present, the state agencies and systems that serve parents and children are structured as distinct entities, with idiosyncratic processes, procedures and funding streams. Families must navigate independent systems each with its own set of barriers that impede success and reduce the cost-effectiveness of independent interventions; rarely do programs and agencies work together around the needs of a whole family. Working in silos encourages a myopic view of parent and child *outputs* rather than *outcomes* and obscures the areas where agencies could improve service delivery and communication. It is our hope that the heightened data and information sharing between academic achievement, child well-being, and workforce development sectors targeted by this bill will allow the Office of Early Childhood, the Two-Generational Advisory Council and other state agencies to critically and constructively examine barriers and inefficiencies related to family success.

Because two-generation initiatives are on the cutting-edge of family-focused policy, we do not yet know the extent to which the systems changes, data sharing practices, and shifts in agency operation supported by the bill will produce cost-savings for our state.<sup>6</sup> However, it is CAHS's position that whole-family approaches, which simultaneously approach and track outcomes for both adults and children, have the greatest potential to effectively leverage local, state, federal and philanthropic funds to ameliorate chronic, multigenerational poverty and while strengthening Connecticut's future workforce.

Ultimately, CAHS fully supports S.B. 437 and applauds the work of the Human Services Committee in further directing Connecticut's two-generation initiative. For additional information CAHS's policy priorities and our work regarding two-generation initiatives, please contact me at [efraser@cahs.org](mailto:efraser@cahs.org).

---

<http://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/8590-women-and-health-care-in-the-early-years-of-theaffordable-care-act.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Schmit, S., Matthews, H., & Golden, O. (2014). Thriving Children, Successful Parents: A Two-Generation Approach to Policy. *Center for Law and Social Policy, Inc.(CLASP)*.