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*Testimony of*

**Ray Rossomando**  
**Connecticut Education Association**

*Before the*  
**Committee on Children**

*Re:*  
***SB 6 An Act Concerning Resources and Supports for Infants, Toddlers and Disconnected Youths.***

March 4, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Maher, Representative Paris, Senator Martin, Representative Dauphinais, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children.

The Connecticut Education Association (CEA) is the state's largest association of certified public school teachers, representing over 40,000 active and retired teachers from 160 school districts across Connecticut. CEA works to improve the lives of our teachers, the success of our students, and the quality of public education in our state.

CEA supports SB 6. In particular, we are pleased to see a proposal for kindergarten preparatory academies to meet the needs of children who are five years of age, but who are not yet of the developmentally appropriate kindergarten start age.

The legislature made a wise decision when it raised kindergarten start age to five. Connecticut had maintained the earliest start age in the nation. Educators in the early grades recognized that children who start kindergarten before it is developmentally appropriate for them to do so experienced stress, anxiety, dysregulated behaviors, and negative associations with school. Educators in higher grades observed similar patterns when these same students grew into adolescence. Changing the school start age will have a positive effect on students as they develop, and on school communities as a whole.

When this change was made, some innovative districts adopted successful pre-kindergarten models such as the one proposed in this bill. We support expansion of such programs to other

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school districts provided they are overseen by appropriately certified early educators. We also support including children who attend these programs in the student counts that determine Education Cost Sharing grant amounts.

Thank you.