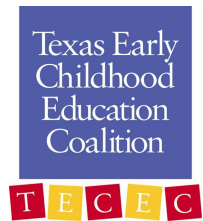


Dr. Donald J. Smith, Jr.

Testimony to the Committee on Health & Human Services
Senate for the state of Texas



Senator Nelson and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Dr. Donald Smith. I am the Director of Research and Public Policy for the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition. Thank you for this opportunity to offer TECEC's support of SB 1722 and to recognize Senator Uresti for his efforts to improve the quality of care for the children of the state of Texas.

Early childhood is recognized as a critical time of growth, development and maturation in a person's life. During this time, we entrust the care of our greatest assets, our children, to a group of professionals whose passion and devotion are without question. Despite their dedication, many of these professionals are expected to shape the lives of our children without our full support. The availability of training and education for child care providers and early education specialists is limited by a critical lack of resources.

Today, you have before you SB 1722 which is intended to develop resources which can be used to meet the growing needs of these professionals in our state. The knowledge gained by those tasked with the care of the children of Texas can only improve the quality of the services that are available.

During this 81st Legislative Session, there has been a focus upon the need for quality child care services in Texas. SB 1722 makes great strides toward the changes needed to improve the education and training of the child care workforce in the state. TECEC supports SB1722 and applauds Senator Uresti for introducing this vital legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer this testimony. I will gladly take your questions.