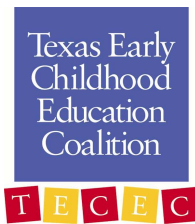


Testimony of:

Dr. Donald Smith
Director of Research and Public Policy
Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition
(TECEC)



Before the:

House Human Services Committee

House Bill 4202

April 9, 2009

Mr. Chair, members of the Human Services Committee and Representative Herrero. My name is Dr. Donald Smith and I am the Director of Research and Public Policy for the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC). TECEC represents more than 275 organizations and thousands of members from across the great state of Texas. Our partners include representatives from public schools, Head Start, child care, the business community, higher education, foundations, community based organizations, and more. I would like to begin my remarks by thanking each of you for your leadership and accepting my testimony today. I would also like to thank Representative Herrero for authoring this critical legislation.

In the state of Texas, there exists a growing effort to improve the quality of early childhood education and child care. A key component of this effort is the push to set standards for training of professionals who care for our most valuable asset; our children. Despite the push to improve the quality of the training for early childhood educators and child care professionals, efforts have been slowed because of the lack of resources to pay for the changes.

Today, you have before you, HB 4202 authored, most gratefully, by Representative Herrero. This bill has the potential to fuel the efforts to provide quality training across the state with the creation of an account dedicated exclusively to education efforts for early childhood professionals.

TECEC strongly supports HB 4202 that will further the professional development of early educators and ultimately protect the young children of Texas. On behalf of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition, I want to again thank Representative Herrero for authoring this bill and this committee for the opportunity to offer this testimony.