



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1100 – Child Care Providers
and Employees - Bonuses
Ways and Means Committee
March 4, 2022**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools, childcare centers and community centers, and campaign for important policy interests on behalf of not only the Jewish community, but for all Marylanders.

The JCRC strongly supports affordable and accessible childcare. This commitment is rooted in the Jewish mandate to champion the poor and the needy. It is also our sense of ethical responsibility to ensure that all parents and their children have the ability to maintain their economic well-being and dignity. The impact of the pandemic on our childcare system can not be underestimated. According to the Maryland Early Childhood Advisory Council, there are 855 fewer childcare providers in Maryland today than in March 2020.

To achieve higher quality childcare, the JCRC supports House Bill 1100, which creates a fund to attract workers to this job sector. HB 1100 establishes funding and the distribution of bonuses for childcare providers and employees. Specifically, the Bill requires that in FY2024, the Governor includes in the annual budget an appropriation of \$16,000,000 to the State Department of Education to carry out the Act. The Bill would create \$1000 retention bonuses and \$1000 bonuses for new hires.

Due to the pandemic, which shuttered hundreds of childcare facilities, the State now faces a severe shortage of childcare workers. Low wages continue to be one of the main recruitment challenges. To address these issues and help recruit and fund childcare workers, the JCRC asks the committee for a favorable report on HB 1100.