February 3, 2022

House Bill 89
Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child Care Expansion Grant Program
– Established

House Ways and Means Committee
House Appropriations Committee

SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT to House Bill 89. The Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 89 would provide financial support to licensed child care providers in Maryland at imminent risk of closing due to financial hardship. This legislation also seeks to increase access and availability of licensed child care through financial assistance grants to new or existing eligible child care providers.

These grants would provide much needed support to a vital and essential sector of Marylanders' everyday lives. Hundreds of providers have been forced to close their doors since the coronavirus pandemic began in early 2020, leading to less options for child care access for working families. With the passage of this bill, pandemic-afflicted child care providers will be able to use grants to ensure they remain open in service to needing Maryland families.

Child Care is an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Additionally, the Church supports this bill as a part of its priority interest in alleviating poverty in our state, as enabling working parents' continued access to child care services is an imperative part of combating poverty. Often, a barrier to sustainable and full-time employment is the availability and affordability of reliable child care services. The State should thus do all it can to support access to child care services for working parents.

The Conference appreciates your consideration, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 89.