



2831 15th Street NW, • Washington DC 20009
☎ (202) 462-4788 • 📠 (202) 667-3706 • www.lcdp.org

Support PG Bill 504-24 Student Childcare Centers and PG Bill 505-24 Family Childcare Home Expansion Grant Program

Prince George's County Delegation
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Williams,

Thank you for allowing La Clínica del Pueblo to come before your committee. We request a favorable report on PG Bill 504 - Student Childcare Centers and PG Bill 505 - Family Childcare Home Expansion Grant Program. My name is Suyanna Linhales Barker. I am the Chief of Programs and Community Services at La Clínica del Pueblo, a clinic opened 40 years ago to provide preventative healthcare to newly arrived immigrants. In these years of operation, we have expanded our services to Prince George's County. We have been a strong voice for immigrants through our leadership and their presence in our organization. We see approximately 2,000 immigrants in Prince George's County and focus on providing primary care, mental health, and community outreach programs.

Additionally, we have a school-based mental health program within Northwestern High School called Mi Refugio to provide mental health, college preparation, and positive youth development programming. Over the years, we have seen an incredible spike in teen pregnancy within this high school, and we see it inside our County. We assist these young mothers by providing services for their children and prenatal care. Nonetheless, these young ladies must drop out of school due to a lack of a support system to provide for their young children. This maintains the cycle of poverty, relegating these young women to an early work environment that does not allow them to grow professionally.

Our county has a teen pregnancy rate for Black and Hispanic women that is above the average of the state. These childcare centers would allow these young parents to attend school, complete their education, and have better economic and workforce opportunities for themselves and their families. This would additionally allow individuals interested in early education to gain valuable experience.

In support of PG Bill 505, La Clínica del Pueblo recognizes the crucial need for accessible and quality childcare in our community. This bill's commitment to expanding family childcare homes addresses a vital gap, particularly for young mothers and immigrant families we serve. By empowering more individuals to become certified childcare providers, we enhance early childhood education and support women's economic independence and professional growth. This initiative aligns seamlessly with our mission, promising a stronger, healthier, more resilient community where every family has the support they need to thrive.

I appreciate your help and ask that you please consider our request for a favorable report on PG Bill 504 - Student Childcare Centers and PG Bill 505 - Family Childcare Home Expansion Grant Program.

Sincerely,

Suyanna Linhales Barker
Suyanna Linhales Barker, DrPH
Chief of Programs and Community Services