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Appropriations Committee

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Capital Budget

Vice Chair, Education  
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Joint Audit and Evaluation  
Committee

**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 1455 Testimony – Public Kindergarten and Child Care Providers – Waiver Action Plan and Assistance Hubs**  
**March 6 2024**

**Ways and Means Committee**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on my bill HB 1455 to ensure a mixed delivery pre-K delivery system involving both public schools and private community-based childcare providers.

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* is investing in Maryland's youngest citizens. A Mixed-Delivery Pre-K system, involving both local public schools and private child care providers, is needed to accommodate the number of students who will be eligible for public pre-kindergarten. In order to attain the goals set by the *Blueprint* for mixed delivery, it is imperative that the state work to remove the numerous barriers for private providers to achieve the current codified requirements for a 50-50 split of private and public slots for prekindergarten.

The blueprint recognized that reaching that 50% goal would take time and effort. As such, there is a provision that allows a County Board to request a waiver from MSDE if they are unable to meet the goal for that given year. HB1455 would make common sense changes to that waiver process and require the County Board to submit an action plan demonstrating how the County plans to meet the requirements in the coming year.

Additionally, HB1455 recognizes that private providers may need assistance navigating the process to participate in public pre-kindergarten. The bill would create assistance hubs throughout the state to support child care providers and coordinate partnerships in the state's mixed delivery system. The bill also creates a Child Care Provider Hub Advisory Committee made up of a diverse group of stakeholders and experts to help guide and advise MSDE on establishing and implementing the hub program across Maryland.

It's worth noting that this hub model is reflective of a recommendation by the AIB in a report on the mixed-delivery system.

We all know how important it is that Maryland is investing in our youngest citizens through universal pre-k. HB1455 take necessary steps to ensure that private providers are supported and able to participate in the mixed-delivery system.

**Thank you for your consideration and I ask for a favorable report on HB 1455.**