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SB0833

Department of Human Services - Study on Private Treatment Foster Care Homes

House Appropriations Committee **POSITION: SUPPORT AS AMENDED**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Arrow Child & Family Ministries, we are writing to express our unwavering support for Senate Bill 0833, a critical piece of legislation that would allow Private Treatment Foster Care Parents to receive the same child care subsidies as Public Foster Parents.

As a provider working directly with foster families, we have witnessed firsthand the struggles they endure to provide care for the children they welcome into their homes. Childcare is often a significant hurdle, with many families facing financial barriers that limit their ability to access high quality services. This legislation is a beacon of hope for foster care families who tirelessly work to provide safe, loving homes for children in need. By offering subsidies and scholarships for childcare, Senate Bill 0833 addresses a significant financial challenge, allowing foster families to allocate resources more effectively to meet the comprehensive needs of foster children.

Historically, Treatment Foster Homes licensed by private Child Placement Agencies were not afforded the child care subsidies provided to public Foster Homes. The rationale was that the higher stipend paid to private TFC families would cover the costs. Over time, the rising cost of child care has resulted in this no longer being the case. Many families report that the cost of child care takes up most of not all or more of the stipend. This is especially true if the child needs therapeutic child care, which is even more expensive for families.

To conclude, we urge you to support SB 0833 as amended to determine how best to support foster care families and children of Maryland. This bill is a step toward a more compassionate, supportive system that recognizes the needs of foster families and provides the necessary resources to meet those needs. Your support for this legislation is a vote for the stability, well-being, and future of our foster children and their caregivers.

Thank you.

Robert Basler, LCSW-C
Associate Vice President
Arrow Child & Family Ministries