



ARCO IRIS

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER

February 19, 2025

Testimony Concerning Support for:

**SB462: State Boards, Committees, Commissions, Task Forces, and Workgroups-Elimination of
Citizenship Requirements and Establishment of Diversity Requirements**

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Ruth Carolina Reyes

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Good afternoon Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment,

I am Carolina Reyes, an owner/director of Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center located in Laurel Prince George's County, and an advocate for early childhood education.

Maryland has the opportunity to fully embody the Board of Education's vision of "ensuring all students have access to a world-class educational system that prepares

them to graduate ready.” Achieving this vision requires providing high-quality learning opportunities for all children, starting with early childhood education from birth!

Maryland must fully integrate our early childhood community across sectors by allowing representation on the Board of Education. Adding a seat for an early childhood development professional will bring inclusion, amplify the voices of those in the field, and bring real stories from those families and educators who experience the system daily.

Maryland decided to elevate and improve early childhood education by creating the Blueprint for Universal Pre-k with the idea of a mixed-delivery system. But in order to have a true mixed-delivery system, we need representation at the table where decision-making happens.

The board has a student, a parent, and a teacher being part of the board. And why is this? Because the Board values their daily experiences and their input on important decisions is needed - right? Then why not have a representative of the vast childcare community. Yes, I said CHILDCARE. Maybe, by having representation on the Board, we can end the stigma that childcare is simply babysitting.

“Early Childhood Development Professionals” are childcare teachers.

Childcare is the foundation of education and it is time we make these experts in early childhood development become members of the Board of Education and continue to support their mission to be part of the strategic direction and leadership; to support policy making and resource allocation; and foster engagement and advocacy.

Maryland needs to push for transformative change and we can start by having representation on the Board.

I ask for your favorable support.

Sincerely,

R. Carolina Reyes

Gracias!