



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1303: Child Care Centers – Teacher Qualifications Alterations
April 2nd, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1303: Child Care Centers – Teacher Qualifications – Alterations**.

Through conversations with Montgomery County's vibrant and growing refugee community, I have learned about the desire to gain more access to work opportunities in the community. Many refugees arrive in Maryland after fleeing political or economic strife, often with little more than the clothes on their backs. In the process, they may lose critical documentation, including proof of education. Without access to these documents, the process of otherwise qualified individuals finding work becomes immensely harder.

At the same time, Maryland's child care facilities are struggling to hire and retain qualified teachers. House Bill 1303 addresses both challenges by calling for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop a pathway for an individual who lacks proof of their educational attainment to work as a child care teacher.

While the original version of this bill codified existing regulatory requirements- such as coursework and employment- as minimum experiential qualifications for childcare teachers, the current version defers to MSDE to develop this pathway. This adjustment ensures that individuals, like refugees, who are qualified but lack formal proof of educational attainment, still have a viable path to employment, while preserving MSDE's established processes. By doing so, it helps to alleviate workforce shortages while maintaining high standards in early childhood education.

[From the Maryland Department of Education two million in short-term grants](#) for early child care providers to [the expansion of Pre-K access through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#), we are making meaningful progress in addressing the child care crisis. However, there is still more to be done. Furthermore, in the face of federal policies that send a message of exclusion to refugees and immigrants, Maryland must reaffirm its commitment to inclusion, opportunity, and economic mobility.

For the benefit of our children, families, and workforce, I respectfully urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1303**.

Bernice Mireku-North