



**Testimony Concerning HB 931 – Child Care Providers – Notice of Allegations of
Child Abuse or Neglect (Aiden’s Law)**

Submitted to House Judiciary Committee

February 18, 2021

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a non-profit association advocating on behalf of approximately 4800+ registered family child care providers and large family child care homes in Maryland. These child care providers typically work alone in small mixed-age group settings and are a vital part of the child care delivery system in Maryland.

MSFCCA believes HB 931 is a positive step in protecting all children in child care and fully supports reporting incidences of abuse and neglect on the part of a child care program. It is concerning to us however that the language in HB 931 does seem to indicate only Family Child Care Providers being the intended child care settings to be mandated. This legislation should be directed at *all* forms of child care, including child care centers, nursery schools, school-age programs, etc. We ask that the language be Amended to clearly include all child care settings where children are cared for.

HB 931, states that a child care provider will be required to report “suspected” child abuse or neglect to all parents and/or guardians of children in a child care program within 24 hours after having knowledge of an incident. We request that the Bill be Amended, and the word “suspected” be deleted. If an incident or allegation of an incident is “suspected” and proves to be

untrue or is found to have no negligence on the part of the provider, it will have already become part of a providers permanent record and be accessible to potential clients on www.checkccmd.org.

Further, it is recommended that “visual evidence” be required before mandatory reporting of the incident to all parents and/or guardians of children in a child care program. Reporting to the authorities is understood and necessary when an incident is suspected, but it should not be reported to other families in the program until it is substantiated. Child care is a reputation driven profession and an alleged incident that is “suspected” and found false or unfounded can ruin a provider’s business.

Finally, we recommend that a specific reporting form be designated by the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE) clearly documenting the specifics of an incident, but that it should not include names of children in the program unless the incident is substantiated. Child care providers in Maryland are already mandatory reporters and take that responsibility very seriously, this is the reason specific Amendments to this Legislation are important for our continued support.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh-in on this important legislation and we ask that HB 931 be revised to include our Amendments for a favorable vote. For any further questions feel free to contact Rebecca Hancock, the MSFCCA Vice President of Public Policy at (301) 934-4445.