



**Testimony Concerning HB 944**  
**“Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program – Established”**  
**Submitted to the House Ways & Means and Appropriations Committees**  
**February 24, 2021**

**Position: Support**

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports HB 944, which would establish the “Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program” to increase and sustain the supply of family child care.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education, as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

Registered family child care is an important part of Maryland's child care delivery system. Family child care providers offer child care that most closely resembles the care that children receive in their own homes. Family child care providers care for many children who have special needs or need care during nontraditional hours. They also provide linguistically and culturally appropriate care within many communities in the State.

Unfortunately, the number of registered family child care providers in Maryland has been declining precipitously for more than two decades, from a high of 12,514 in November 1996 to 5,126 in June 2020. Data analysis by MFN projects a further decrease of about 27% from 2021 to 2025. (See: [https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/MFN\\_Trends\\_Feb2021%20%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/MFN_Trends_Feb2021%20%20FINAL_0.pdf).) The declining number of family child care homes brings a tremendous degree of unmet need.

Montgomery County's Go FCC! Program was designed to expand the supply of registered family child care providers in underserved communities and to encourage the participation of women who might face barriers to becoming registered. It has demonstrated remarkable success. HB 944 would create pilot programs and attempt to replicate that success in other jurisdictions, ultimately helping expand the supply of quality child care while supporting the efforts of low-income women--many in communities of color--to establish successful small businesses.

For these reasons, we urge your favorable consideration of HB 944.



