mdaeyc

Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Testimony in Support of HB 608
"Early Childhood Education - Child Care Provider Support Grant Program
(The Child Care Provider Support Act)"
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee
February 5, 2021

Position: Support

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) supports HB 608, which would establish a grant program to provide funds to support the operating expenses required to sustain child care programs during the pandemic.

MDAEYC is a professional association of 1,500 early childhood educators, allied professionals, and families. We promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood education practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. Many of our members are educators working in child care centers or family child care homes.

We hear from our members daily about the immense financial strain their child care programs are under due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many sectors of our economy, the child care sector has been devastated by the pandemic. Child care programs are operating with reduced group sizes in classrooms to limit COVID exposure, and increased expenses for extra cleaning supplies, PPE (personal protective equipment) and staff time to implement new health and sanitation protocols. These new and necessary requirements increase child care programs' operating expenses. As a result, many programs are running at a financial loss just to remain open.

Survey data from Maryland child care providers show that 64% of child care providers said they are currently operating at substantial loss, even as they are desperately trying to stay open for the children and families they serve.[1] The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), our national organization, conducted a series of surveys of the impact of the pandemic on child care providers nationally over the past

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[1] National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2020, December). *State Data: Child Care Providers Are Sacrificing to Stay Open and Waiting for Relief.* https://www.naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys

year.[2] In the most recent survey, conducted in November 2020, NAEYC surveyed thousands of programs across the country. NAEYC surveyed 213 child care providers in Maryland (with 51% from child care centers and 49% from family child care homes). The survey responses reveal that child care providers in Maryland and around the country are facing financial crisis and risk closing their programs permanently:

- 68% of Maryland child care providers surveyed said that they have put supplies or other items on their personal credit cards, or have dipped into their personal savings accounts to help support their child care programs.
- 32% of Maryland child care providers surveyed said that they will have to close their programs within three months if enrollment stays where it is and they don't receive additional public support.

The widespread closure of child care programs would be devastating for child care staff. Beyond that, child care program closures would also be damaging to our communities and businesses. Most parents with young children need child care in order to report to work. Without child care programs, workers in all sectors of our economy will face a child care shortage, which will limit their ability to work.

HB 608 would provide critical financial support to child care programs, to enable them to remain open and operating. We urge your support of this legislation.

If you have any questions, please contact: Christina Lopez, President, at christina.lopez@mdaeyc.org or 301-751-1626.

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[2] National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2020, December). *Am I Next? Sacrificing to Stay Open, Child Care Providers Face a Bleak Future Without Relief.* https://www.naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys