

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB0480 - Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child Care Expansion Grant Program

February 16th, 2022

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, thank you for your consideration of SB480, which will establish two grant programs to stabilize and expand the availability of childcare in the state of Maryland.

According to MSDE, 751 childcare providers in Maryland have closed their doors since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – that’s over 10% of providers in our state. This industry has not rebounded like many others, unfortunately, and a recent Maryland Family Network survey reported that 51% of providers are in danger of closing within the next year due to COVID-19 related disruptions to their business such as increased cleaning and PPE costs, lowered revenue due to capacity limits, and staffing shortages.

The kinetic impacts to families, businesses, and communities when childcare providers close are significant and wide-ranging. Single parents and essential workers, who could not work from home, felt the brunt of the child care shortage more intensely and were left with few child care options.

It is imperative that the state increase its support. SB480 will establish two grant programs within MSDE in order to 1.) provide up to \$35,000 of emergency financial support to child care programs in danger of closing within the next 12 months and 2.) provide up to \$50,000 of financial support to new childcare programs in the state, or programs that are in the process of expanding their existing capacity. This bill will go a long way towards stabilizing those child care centers currently on the brink of collapse. **I respectfully request a favorable report on SB480.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Carroll and Howard Counties