

**Testimony Concerning SB 480 - Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child
Care Expansion Grant Program**

Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

February 16, 2022

Position: Support

Good Morning, my name is Rebecca Hancock I am a family child care provider in Charles County. I have been a registered family child care provider through the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) since 1995. I am saddened to see in recent years there has been a dramatic decline (closures) in family child care programs for many years, but none so much as in the last year and half. I realize Covid-19 has caused much havoc among many small businesses, but the loss of quality family child care programs should be a huge concern to all Maryland families. Working parents struggled to find good quality child care before Covid but the sharp rise in Covid related closings make it so much more difficult.

As a family child care provider, I have always struggled with a fluctuating income due to the mandated small group size. Most providers, like myself, are registered for up to eight (8) children, and even this has been hard to maintain with Covid disruptions, changes in Covid Restrictions, and parents working remotely or leaving the workforce entirely. While my enrollment is down, the cost of running my small business continues to rise. The ever-increasing cost of remaining in business with such small income margins is a huge concern to myself and other providers. The Child Care Stabilization Grants have enabled large numbers of programs to remain in business that may have otherwise closed, but ongoing help is still needed. SB 480 can help to stabilize the current childcare industry, as well as provide the financial support needed to increase availability of new programs and give access for working families.

Many family child care providers are interested in becoming 4-infant homes and/or Large Family Child Care Homes. SB 480 can provide the much needed help to make these transitions. Large family child care homes are licensed for 12 children, with the help of the Expansion Grant these programs can offer 4 additional spaces, thereby increasing more access to working families. They may also require increased staff which opens employment opportunities for those seeking work.

SB 480 would help prevent further program closures and support expansion. Your favorable vote is needed to help providers, families and communities in Maryland and support Economic Recovery. I respectfully ask for a favorable vote on SB 480 the Child Care Stabilization Grant and Child Care Expansion Grant. If you have any further questions you may contact me at (301) 934-4445 or email me at kaysplayhouse1@yahoo.com. Thank you again for the opportunity to share this important matter concerning Maryland's Children.

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