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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 920- Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations

Ways and Means Committee – March 4, 2022 SUPPORT AS AMENDED

Background: Senate Bill 920, (SB920) would create presumptive eligibility for the subsidy under the the Child Care Scholarship Program. An individual would be required to certify that they meet the eligibility requirements of the subsidy and submit an electronic form to the department. The individual would automatically receive the subsidy after they submit the form. They would have 15 days to fill out the full application, and would continue to receive the subsidy until the department makes an eligibility determination. Further, SB920 would require that no copay be paid by subsidy recipients who participate in certain voucher and assistance programs.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents that Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all its agencies, including Jewish Community Services (JCS). JCS provides financial support services to people in need, including linking them with Federal, State and Local benefits and programs. Many parents must make the hard choice between entering the workforce and affording child care. This disproportionately affects minorities, women and single parents.

Maryland has one of the highest costs (ranked number 7) of child care in the country, averaging over \$15,000 a year for infant care.¹ This is 67% of a minimum wage workers annual salary. The Child Care Scholarship Program is a lifesaver for low-income working parents, however, the program, as currently administered makes it almost impossible for those trying to get back into the workforce because it requires proof of employment or job training before someone is eligible. This means that someone would need to find child care and afford that child care before starting employment. The reforms in SB920 would help more people be eligible for the subsidy and remove the current barriers.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report on SB920.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

¹ <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MD>

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated



