

March 2, 2022

**Testimony Concerning Support for:
HB 933 Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations (MD Child Care Working Families Act)**

Submitted to the House Committee on Ways and Means
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We urge your support for legislation that will benefit working families, and the struggling child care providers that serve them.

Prince George’s Child Resource Center envisions vibrant, healthy communities where individuals and families care, support, and advocate for each other and invest in creating opportunities for children to develop strong, successful life paths. The Resource Center has been working tirelessly since 1990 to support both child care providers in their efforts to strive for quality in their child care programs, and parents as they seek child care where their children can thrive.

Child care providers across the nation continue to struggle as they recover during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Child care providers are in crisis, and so are families, and Prince George’s County is no exception. In Prince George’s County, area child care providers are experiencing deep challenges with funding/finances, staffing and enrollment which are all totally intertwined. The stabilization funds offered in 2021 were an important step. There is more to be done. The quality of child care, and the experience of the birth-to-five years, are crucial to school readiness and supporting working families.

HB933 strengthens family eligibility so that more families have more choices and access to the child care programs that meet their needs, which would have a tremendous stabilizing impact for families and for their child care provider. In addition to expanding family eligibility for scholarship, the bill calls for 12-month eligibility regardless of changes in family income or employment. Prioritizing the waiting list to families with very low incomes and ensuring a sliding fee scale for families in the expanded scholarship program will help both providers and families.

Thank you for your leadership for our community. Together we can help child care programs to stay open successfully and offer more choices for families, when we make sure that all the pieces and parts of policy ideas come together. Again, I urge your support for HB933.

