

**Testimony Concerning H.B 0993, the Early Childhood Education –Child Care Capital
Support Revolving Loan Fund
Submitted to the House Committee on Ways and Means**

HB 0993

My name is Katie Young and I am in favor of House Bill 0993. The cost to open and operate a high quality Childcare center has increase over 20% since the COVID 19 pandemic. How do I know this? Because I am the girl who prior to COVID 19 was finally able to bring her life long dream to life. For the past 10 years I have been a school director in a high quality childcare center, Celebree School. In 2019 my husband and I decided to invest everything we have so I could become a Celebree franchisee. The fact that I would be able to provide high quality care in a community that I loved was a feeling of euphoria. I can not put into words how emotional it was to be a part of something that I have been living and breathing for so long. There are truly no words.

This high was quickly shattered once we had to reevaluate our start up cost. Our \$1.4 million dollar start up increased to \$2 million over night. My husband and I are your typical blue-collar workers. He does HVAC for a living, and I run a Celebree School. We would never be approved for a \$1 million loan. This is only feasible by making more sacrifices then anyone would truly understand.

Did you know that on average 75% of childcare franchisee's have zero childcare or education experience? But what they do have is money. They have the ability to pay a 20% cash injection for a SBA loan. In fact, most of them have the money to pay cash up front. This amount of money is something that your typical childcare provider or HVAC worker have. On the flip side, what the 75% does not have is the experience and passion that someone like I do. Unfortunately for most school directors, they will never be given the opportunity to own and operate their own "high quality" school. HB 0993 can be the difference maker for us!

High quality comes at a cost. A cost that I can validate the why behind. Unfortunately, with the current state of our economy and without HB 0993, it is nearly impossible for a "Katie" to be a part of furthering Early Childhood Education in Maryland. I know I would want a Katie to educate my children.