



ARCO IRIS

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER

March 2, 2022

Testimony Concerning Support for:

HB 933 Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations (Maryland Child Care Working Families Act)

HB 995 Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations

Submitted to the House Committee on Ways and Means

Ruth Carolina Reyes

Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

14502 Greenview Drive, suite102

301-483-8800 Center

301-538-1978 Cellular

arcoirisbcc@gmail.com

We urge your support for legislation to help ensure a thriving child care system in Maryland for our families.

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; Prince George's County is no exception. I am also no exception. As the Owner/Director of Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center, I have seen how my families have struggled paying for childcare during the last few years; it is unlike anything I have seen before. Many families want to come to my center because it is certified Maryland Excels level 3,

providing high quality education with well educated teachers in a unique bilingual environment. However, they cannot due to their economic means which do not give them access on their own. When these same families want to access the childcare scholarship they enter a system that is bureaucratic and burdensome.

The issue is the extensive and unprecedented delays in providing working families and single mothers the financial resources needed for their child care needs. This issue does not just impact families but also childcare providers since providers have to wait an extended period of time to obtain the scholarship money.

This bill HB933 and HB 995 will help many families very much and allow them the ability to access high quality centers like mine. It is now more pressing than ever to resolve this issue. Although the state has increased the income levels for child care scholarships, I have seen firsthand the extensive delays in answering working families and single mothers who often lack support systems. These families rely on child care centers to reenter the workforce. Therefore, providing the rapid and efficient assistance for these families is necessary, not only for them, but also the child care centers which are an essential ingredient for ensuring a healthy Maryland economy.

Sincerely,

R. Carolina Reyes