

**February 21, 2023**

**Testimony Concerning SB 873:  
“Child Care Provider Stabilization Program – Established”**

**Submitted to the Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment**

**Audrey Pabs-Garnon  
Hopes & Dreams Infant Toddler Center  
5307 Powhatan Road, Riverdale, MD 20737  
301.699.7886  
hopesanddreams2002@gmail.com**

Child care providers are in crisis, and so are families, and Prince George’s County is no exception. I am no exception.

SB 873 calls for monthly payments to licensed child care providers who are willing and able to enroll children who receive a subsidy through the Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP). I urge your support for this legislation.

Through this bill, I could receive as much as \$2,500 per month to be used for cleaning and food supplies, early childhood educator wages, and the ongoing expenses of running my program and being available to the families counting on me so that they can go to work. I thank Senator Washington for leading this bill and for seeing what it takes to do this every day.

I am a licensed Child Care Center in Riverdale, Prince George’s County, Maryland. I have been in business for over 30 years and was one of the few Essential Personnel Child Care [EPCC] centers that remained open throughout the pandemic. I have in the past, currently have and am willing and able to enroll families who pay with scholarship/subsidy. I am an infant toddler center licensed for 25 children. At the moment I have 12 children enrolled.

In Prince George’s County, area child care providers like me are experiencing deep challenges with Funding, finances, staffing and enrollment which are all totally intertwined. The stabilization funds offered in 2021 and 2022 were an important step. There is more to be done.

An additional \$2500 per month would enable me to offer better benefits to the staff, thereby increasing the quality of my workforce. This in turn would make a difference in my ability to consistently be there for children and their working parents.

We need help rebuilding our businesses and keeping our quality, relationship-based practices strong, so we can be there for working parents and for young children. The quality of child care and the experience of the formative birth-to-five years are crucial to school readiness and supporting working families.

We must continue to take steps to stabilize the child care sector and the well-being of people who work in child care, and we must also rebuild child care better than before.

The child care crisis is not over in Maryland. Thank you for your leadership and your support for child care through recent General Assembly sessions. There’s more to do and we can do it together! THANK YOU for supporting SB 873!