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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**Senate Bill 873 - Child Care Provider Stabilization Program – Established
 Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – February 22, 2023**

SUPPORT

Background: SB873 would require an annual budget appropriation to establish and maintain the Child Care Provider Stabilization Program in the State Department of Education. Each Child Care Provider would receive \$2,500 per month if they have children enrolled that are eligible under the program or \$300 if they do not have children enrolled that are eligible under the program.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) represents that Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies, including the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Baltimore (JCC's). The JCC's run two early childhood centers, one of which was closed for a large part of 2020 due to the pandemic. The economic impact has been great for not only our JCC's but for several other ECC's in the Jewish community, including centers attached to our synagogues. To give a snapshot of the impact, the Owings Mills JCC in FY20 (June 19-July 20) had a revenue of \$1.9 million, whereas the projected revenue for FY21 is \$1.4 million (with the help of the Federal PPP). 16% of childcare centers in our state had closed by January 2021 and by November 2021 751 centers had closed. The remaining ECCs in our community, as well as others across the State of Maryland, are still working to recover from the pandemic losses.

Now that the COVID pandemic is relatively behind us and parents/guardians are expected to physically go back to the office, many are once again relying on childcare centers. This is particularly true for women and single parents who will be forced out of the workforce if there is no readily available childcare. Providing financial support to childcare providers should be an instrumental part of our state's focus as we continue to navigate the post-pandemic workforce expectations.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of SB873.

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.