



Hearing Testimony March 1, 2023  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC

**House Bill 868 – Child Care Provider Stabilization Program - Established**

**SUPPORT**

Hello, my name is Crystal Barksdale, I am proud member of SEIU Local 500 and owner of Ms. Crystal's Little Rugrats Child Care. SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, Faculty and Staff at several Maryland colleges and universities, staff at non-profits and many other working people across the region. **We urge a FAVORABLE Report on HB 868 – the Child Care Provider Stabilization Program.** We would also like to thank Delegate McCaskill for her many years as a SEIU Local 500 leader and her tireless advocacy for the child care community.

The last three years have been like no other for most, if not all, of us. The impact of COVID-19 was felt acutely by parents, children and providers in our child care system. The top reason why so many Marylanders did not return to work when their businesses or employers reopened was, they could not find affordable, reliable, quality child care.

HB 868 addresses a crisis facing our state. In the last few years there's been a precipitous drop in the number of child care providers who accept children enrolled in the Child Care Scholarship Program. In 2010, based on the information provided to us by the state, there were approximately 8,000 licensed family child care providers. Today, there are only 3,900 and of those, only about 1,200 accept children in the CCS Program. Unless you act, that number is likely to continue to decline.

What COVID-19 taught me was that child care was finally SEEN as an essential and important part of the workforce that keeps our community thriving. What it also showed me is that the state deemed child care Essential for just those three years, after the world opened back up it was business usual. Personally I feel as though child care providers were no longer as important, we no longer MATTERED. Child care providers put their lives, their homes and their safety and mental health on the line to care for children. We deserve funding that is reliable and expressive of what we do for the community. Passing HB 868 would continue us on that path. The bill takes a simple and straightforward approach to drawing more providers into the market – it provides a modest

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**Pia Morrison, President**



financial incentive for accepting children in the Child Care Scholarship Program. We believe this is a smart, relatively small investment that will pay significant dividends for Maryland's parents, children, businesses, and providers.

**We ask a FAVORABLE REPORT ON HB 868.**

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