



**Testimony Concerning House Bill 868
Submitted to the House
Ways and Means Committee**

March 1, 2023

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a Professional Family Child Care Association that has represented Maryland's Registered Family Child Care and Large Family Child Care homes since 1983. The mission of MSFCCA is to promote and enhance the profession by advocating for all of the 989 small child care businesses through the 19 local Associations that make up our statewide membership. In addition, our advocacy efforts extend to all other child care programs in Maryland that may not be members of MSFCCA.

Registered Family Child Care programs across Maryland serve thousands of children each day which enables their parents to work and support a strong Maryland Economy. MSFCCA advocates on pending legislation, regulatory changes, and statewide programs and initiatives that support or impact the providers communities and their small businesses by working closely with legislators, local association leadership and other Advocacy Organizations. We offer professional development opportunities to our members with training on the latest in policy and developmentally appropriate practice while promoting and supporting quality regulated child care. The MSFCCA leadership are volunteers that currently work, or have worked, as registered family child care providers and passionately serve this unique and vital profession.

Maryland is recognized as a leader nationally in early care and education policy and MSFCCA is grateful for the opportunity to affect change to ensure equal access to early care and education for all children in Maryland. The first five years are critical in a child's development, for this

reason, adequate funding and reasonable policy is *vital* for these programs to guarantee continued service to Maryland families.

Unfortunately, we have seen a dramatic decline in child care programs over the last decade. Many reasons have been blamed for the closings, however the most recognized reason is an inability to maintain financial security in a family child care program. With the closure of so many In-home and Center programs it has caused a child care crisis for parent's seeking quality programs for their children.

MSFCCA whole-heartedly supports legislation that will help stabilize the child care field and provide quality child care programs for Maryland's Children. MSFCCA strongly supports HB 868 along with our child care partners in the field.