

February 27, 2023

**Testimony Concerning HB 868:  
“Child Care Provider Stabilization Program – Established”**

**Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

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

HB 868 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.

Insert some things about you/your program, for instance:

- That you are licensed
- That you are willing and able to enroll families who pay with scholarship/subsidy
- Your licensed capacity is 200, only 117 children are enrolled now

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.

The additional \$2500 per month in stabilization grant funding would make a difference to our ability to be there for working parents and their children. We would like to use these funds to offer special assistance to the many children who need resources to support their emotional and social development. We would also like to use these funds to help stabilize our work force, to lessen the turnover of teachers due to current unlivable wages.

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 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 HB 868.

Blessings +

*Rebecca Stewart*

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