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### **Testimony of Simone Lovelock: Support HB 1254**

The Honorable Chair and Vice Chair

Good afternoon chair and vice chair, my name is Simone Lovelock. I am the center director at Greenbelt Children's Center, a nationally accredited preschool for 60 children in Prince Georges County. I thank you for the opportunity to come before you in support of HB 1254. Teachers working with young children help to develop brains. Early childhood educators help students to be successful in school and life. The role of a teacher is physically exhausting and emotionally intense. It takes a special person to work in this field.

Compensation is very low and creates difficulty attracting and retaining these very special teachers who come to work every day. It is important that we screen employees before allowing them to work, however this process is costly. For example, it cost \$65.00 out of pocket to get their fingerprints done and currently each person must do every two years. At Greenbelt Children Center we are in partnership with our local school system for public pre-k Therefore, our entire staff who could have access to children have to screen for the public school. Teachers must pay out of pocket, or the center absorbs the cost.

In addition to the burden, which I am describing; my personal criminal background check was lost by CJIS three times. I had to pay to get fingerprinted repeatedly. Unfortunately, the problem has still not been resolved. This problem has existed for a year now, with no help or resolution in sight. This is time-consuming, expensive and quite stressful. This also puts me in a precarious position with licensing. No one should have to wait longer than 5 days to get a clearance! We need them essential workers in our classrooms for the children to learn and families to work.

**I ask that you support the passing off HB1254 so that there is a central location for fingerprinting results to go. This will make this process better for all of us.**