

March 25, 2024

**Testimony in Support of HB 1139 and SB 882
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee**

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My name is Patti Smith and I live in Howard County and I am Director of Greenway Learning Center in Greenbelt, Md. As the Director of a licensed center I see the demand for additional child care spaces and licensed family child care programs are a way to meet that need. GOFCC clears the way for new family providers to be trained to open safe and learning programs to meet the high demands for care.

GOFCC has helped launch 11 new family child care programs across Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties since 2023. There are 30 more individuals working with Child Resource Connect currently, including 6 more in an entirely Spanish-speaking cohort. As an active Director in the child care field I have worked closely with family providers and their role is vital in meeting Maryland's needs for quality care.

Businesses large and small are counting on employees. Employees are counting on child care providers! I know that families are counting on me and GOFCC is making a real difference. Marylanders need this to continue!

We urge the General Assembly to make this pilot a permanent part of the child care system in our state. The bill has passed the Senate, and your colleagues have made room for this investment in the budget too. It is time to say: "let's go for GOFCC!" Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Patti Smith-Director
Greenway Learning Center for Infants and Children