

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1057
Foster Care Families Child Care Assistance Program and Fund
Appropriations
March 12th 2024

As a therapeutic foster parent, I strongly support HB1057, which will provide child care assistance through subsidies and scholarships to eligible foster care families. I work full time and am a single mother to a child who has chronic lifelong medical needs and I pay out of pocket to provide him with childcare that meets his needs.

I have been Peter's mother since his birth and when I returned to work after taking 12 weeks of parental leave, it was imperative that I obtained affordable and reliable childcare options. At the time, I was informed by my son's caseworker specialist, that as a therapeutic foster parent, I was ineligible to receive a daycare stipend, because therapeutic foster parents, overall, receive a higher stipend. I was left with no other option than to pay for infant daycare out of pocket, as the weekly cost of tuition far exceeded the monthly subsidy I was receiving.

I paid \$13,000.00 for 6 months of traditional infant daycare which I ultimately needed to remove him from to protect his health, ensure his safety, and to move him to an environment that would nurture his growth and development. While enrolled in a traditional daycare environment, he was being frequently exposed to and experiencing illness, I witnessed him being struck by another child which resulted in scratches on his face, and he was spending most of his day confined to a crib or bouncing container.

My son's chronic lifelong medical disability renders him ineligible for a traditional daycare facility. He has now been on a waiting list for the only special needs daycare facility that I'm aware of since June 2023 which has led me to opt for live-in childcare for my son by way of an au pair as well as babysitters. I have paid upwards of \$52,000.00 in childcare and related costs, out of pocket since my son has been in my care because he deserves his needs to be met.

The financial support that I can be provided through this bill will allow me to take the money I am putting towards childcare and redirect it to other parts of my son's life that need attention such as educational toys and games to aid in his development, as well as assistive technology equipment to enhance his learning, communication and overall quality of life.

By supporting this bill, you are actively supporting me, my son, and other current and potential Maryland therapeutic foster parents.

I urge a favorable report on HB1057

Rosalyn Johnson