



**Testimony in support of HB 1122: Office of Child Care Advisory Council - Membership - Alterations**  
**Hearing before the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
**March 20, 2025**  
**Submitted by Tonya Aikens, Howard County Library System President & CEO**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am Tonya Aikens, President and CEO of Howard County Library System. I thank the bill sponsor and thank you for the opportunity to express support for HB 1122.

Howard County Library System, as well as representatives from all 24 public library systems in Maryland, belong to the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators. Howard County, like our counterparts across the state, has a strong collaborative relationship with our community's childcare providers. Central to this relationship is our shared commitment to early education, literacy, and preparing our youngest learners for kindergarten.

As the first public classroom for many children, public libraries aid in positively shaping high-quality early childhood experiences. Libraries offer a robust range of early learning programs and services, tailored to the specific needs of the learner and childcare provider.

Howard County Library System staff provide professional development training to early childhood licensed childcare providers, including on the Every Child Ready to Read curriculum to aid providers in engaging their young learners in talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing to support their pre-reading development.

Public libraries also support the business needs of childcare providers through one-on-one appointments with librarians, access to business resources, tools, and networking opportunities.

Integrating library expertise into the Council will significantly enhance the Council's ability to support and guide policies that impact children, families, and childcare providers across our state by leveraging the valuable expertise of librarians.

This bill supports our shared priorities to set Maryland's students up for success and to help end childhood poverty through a stronger and more strategic childcare ecosystem.

Thank you for your support for our state's youngest learners. We respectfully request a favorable report for HB 1122.