

****Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0452 – Child Care Affordability Commission****

Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee

My name is Tiffany Jones and I am a family childcare educator and owner of Precious Moments Family Childcare – a NAFCC Accredited high quality child care program offering state funded Pre-K located in Rockville, Maryland. I am also the Maryland State Rep & Policy Fellow for the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) and President of the Family Child Care Association of Montgomery County (FCCAMC). I am writing to express my strong support for Maryland Senate Bill 0452, which establishes the Child Care Affordability Commission. As someone who works directly with children and families, I can confidently say that it is essential for the voices of child care providers, especially family child care educators, to be included in any conversation about child care affordability.

I am deeply concerned about the growing barriers to providing high-quality, affordable child care for the families who rely on our services. The challenges we face daily in the child care industry are real and pressing. From the rising costs of operation to the struggles of ensuring fair wages for our dedicated educators, it is clear that the current system is not sustainable without comprehensive reform. Senate Bill 0452 provides an opportunity for us to address these issues and build a more equitable and accessible system for families across Maryland.

The inclusion of child care providers in this commission is vital. We are the ones on the ground, working with children and families every day. We are uniquely positioned to speak to the obstacles preventing the expansion of quality child care. Many of these challenges are related to the lack of financial support for providers, which limits our ability to hire and retain skilled educators and expand services. Additionally, without sustainable funding, we cannot offer the necessary supports for families, including those who are most in need of affordable care.

One of the key components of SB0452 is the focus on identifying obstacles to creating a fiscally sustainable system of child care. As a provider, I can tell you that these obstacles are multifaceted. The costs associated with running a child care program—such as staffing, facilities, training, and materials—are often not reflected in the reimbursement rates set by state subsidies. These discrepancies lead to difficult decisions about how we allocate limited resources. We want to provide the best possible care for children, but without adequate financial support, it becomes increasingly difficult to do so without getting reimbursed the cost of quality care.

Furthermore, I fully support the bill's emphasis on expanding access to child care while maintaining quality. This is a delicate balance that cannot be achieved without input from those of us who are actively engaged in providing child care services. We must find innovative ways to support child care providers financially, whether through

business tax credits, a child care scholarship programs that reimburses the cost of quality care equitably between childcare programs , or other incentives that can help us grow and sustain our services.

Ultimately, what we need is a system that supports both the families who need affordable child care and the educators who provide that care. Senate Bill 0452 is a step toward achieving that goal. By including the authentic voices of child care providers in the conversation, we ensure that any recommendations made by the Commission are grounded in the reality of the child care system.

I urge you to support SB0452. It is an essential piece of legislation that has the potential to create meaningful change for families, child care providers, and the workforce as a whole. Let's ensure that our state's child care system is one that is accessible, affordable, and sustainable for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Jones

NAFCC Policy Fellow & NAFCC MD State Rep

President, Family Child Care Association of Montgomery County (FCCAMC)

Board Member, Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA)

Educator & Owner, Precious Moments Family Childcare

301-660-7633

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