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In Support of HB859

My name is Cindi Webb and I am the owner of The Learning Bee, a licensed childcare provider serving families in Frederick Maryland serving families since 2007. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 859 which creates a collaborative approach to ensure outreach and opportunities for access to health insurance for child care professionals. This initiative is crucial for the sustainability of our businesses, the well-being of our workforce, and the quality of care we provide to Maryland's children.

Childcare businesses operate on tight margins, with the majority of our revenue covering essential operating costs such as rent, utilities, and staff wages. Unlike larger industries, we do not have the financial flexibility to offer competitive health insurance benefits. Yet, our employees—who dedicate their lives to nurturing and educating young children—deserve access to quality healthcare. Many of them are forced to forgo medical care or rely on public assistance due to the high costs of private insurance plans.

Supporting health insurance for childcare workers would not only improve their personal health and financial security but would also benefit the children and families we serve. When our employees are healthy, they can provide the consistent, high-quality care that children need for early development. Additionally, improved benefits would help retain experienced staff, reducing turnover rates that disrupt the stability of care and increase operational costs for small businesses like mine.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the essential role that childcare plays in supporting Maryland's economy. Parents depend on us to provide safe, reliable care so they can work, yet our industry remains underfunded and overlooked. Without meaningful support, many childcare centers struggle to remain open, further exacerbating the shortage of early childhood education options across the state.

I urge you to support policies that make health insurance affordable and accessible for childcare employees. Investing in this initiative will strengthen Maryland's childcare infrastructure, support small business owners, and ensure that the dedicated professionals caring for our youngest citizens have the security and peace of mind they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.