

February 19, 2025

Senate Bill 833- Treatment Foster Care Homes – Child Care Stipends for Private Providers

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hallie Rubin and I am writing to express my unwavering support for Senate Bill 833, a critical piece of legislation that proposes to review and reallocate a portion of the Department of Human Services' annual budget to be used to provide child care stipends to certain private treatment foster care homes to cover child care expenses. As someone deeply invested in the welfare of children and families within our foster care system, I cannot overstate the importance of this bill and its potential to significantly improve the lives of many.

During my time as a social worker, I have had the privilege of working for two different treatment foster care programs. My current TFC role includes working closely with our children and their foster families while simultaneously engaging our families in advocacy efforts. I believe in letting their voices guide our work and giving them the space and tools to make their needs known. When brought together, our foster parents, along with foster parents across the state, voiced that childcare was one of the greatest barriers to fostering.

In my role, I see firsthand the impact that access to childcare has on our families. I have witnessed children be turned away due to a lack of childcare. I have also worked with families who have paid thousands of dollars out of pocket to ensure their foster children receive care that meets their specialized needs. They have listed access to childcare and the cost associated with childcare as one of the reasons they wouldn't recommend fostering to others and as a reason to quit being a foster parent.

Senate Bill 833 represents a commitment to supporting foster families by addressing two of the most pressing challenges they face: financial strain and access to quality childcare. By reallocating funds to provide childcare assistance, this legislation demonstrates a recognition of the value and importance of foster families in our community. It acknowledges the sacrifices they make and offers tangible support to ensure they can continue their vital work without compromising on the quality of care or their financial well-being. Moreover, access to child care is essential for foster parents, many of whom balance employment with their caregiving responsibilities. SB 833 will provide much-needed support, ensuring that foster families do not have to choose between financial stability and providing quality care for their children.

To conclude, I urge you to support Senate Bill 833 to support foster care families and children of Maryland. This bill is a step toward a more compassionate, supportive system that recognizes the

needs of foster families and provides the necessary resources to meet those needs. Your support for this legislation is a vote for the stability, well-being, and future of our foster children and their caregivers.

Sincerely,

*Hallie Rubin, LMSW*

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Foster Care Social Worker

The Arc Baltimore