

March 7 2025

Favorable Testimony

HB 1475

I am Nikeiha Wallace the Director of Downtown Baltimore Child Care a nonprofit child care center which has been providing childcare in Baltimore city for 40 years.

I am here today in strong support of House Bill 1475, the Mixed Delivery Model Viability Act, because every child deserves access to high-quality prekindergarten—no matter whether they are served by a public or private provider.

But for that model to succeed, we need to ensure that private providers can truly participate on an equal footing by identifying unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, streamlining payment processes, ensuring fair quality rating procedures,

It is unfair that childcare's eligibility for funding through MSDE is continuously threatened by undue harsh consequences from licensing and EXCELS, when the public schools do not participate in the same systems.

Currently we are unable to plan effectively due to the timeline of PreK award notification. Awards must be made in a timely manner so businesses and families can plan effectively to choose our programs. Public schools are able to enroll in the spring of the previous year.

The present-day reimbursement model for invoicing creates an unnecessary burden on providers. In order to participate in mixed delivery childcare businesses currently must be able to prepay expenses.

By addressing inefficiencies and barriers, we will strengthen the early education system for both families and providers. I urge you, state leaders to support House Bill 1475 so we can build a mixed delivery prekindergarten system that truly works for all Maryland children.