

Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **HB0543**.

Childcare in Maryland is in crisis. As of November 2024, Maryland had only 4,071 Family Child Care programs capable of serving 32,017 children. Fifteen years ago, we had more than twice that capacity: 8,373 programs serving 62,161 children. We have lost over half our family childcare infrastructure.

Many people underestimate the critical role Family Child Care plays in our early care and education system. Family Child Care (FCC) offers parents diversity and flexibility to parents. It costs less, is closer to home, and provides more flexible hours than other options. Many families prefer FCC for its home-like environment, culturally responsive care, and the deep personal bonds families form with their caregivers.

HB0543 prohibits landlords from prohibiting or unreasonably limiting the operation of a family child care home on the premises. This safeguard helps expand child care availability in communities where demand drastically exceeds supply.

Barriers imposed by rental restrictions reduce child care supply, force families onto long waiting lists, and undermine parents' ability to participate in the workforce.

I urge you to support HB0543 because this bill opens the door for more licensed childcare providers to operate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Molly McGriff

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