



**Maryland State
Family Child Care
Association**
www.msfccca.org

Written Testimony

House Bill 1574 – Child Care Providers – Licensing and Registration Alterations and Workgroup to Study Illegally Provided Child Care Submitted to the Ways and Means Committee Hearing Date: March 12, 2026

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Ruby Daniels. I am a licensed family childcare provider with over 30 years of experience serving working families in Maryland. I am also the President of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA), representing thousands of family child care providers across the state. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of **House Bill 1574 with amendments**.

As a provider who has spent decades caring for young children, I strongly believe in safe, high quality childcare environments. HB 1574 includes several provisions that move our system in the right direction. The bill recognizes that when new regulations are introduced, providers need time to understand and properly implement them. The warning period for the first violation during the first year of a new regulation promotes education and collaboration rather than immediate punishment, while still maintaining accountability.

The bill also proposes the creation of a dedicated unit within the Maryland State Department of Education to process criminal background checks for childcare applicants. This is an important step. Delays in background checks often make it difficult for providers to hire staff in a timely manner. A more efficient and transparent process will help programs maintain appropriate staffing while ensuring that strong safety standards remain in place.

However, I would like to highlight an area where I believe the bill can be strengthened. HB 1574 proposes a workgroup to study illegally provided childcare. While gathering information is important, **a study alone is not enough** to address **the risks that illegal childcare poses to children and families**.

Illegal childcare operates outside of the protections that licensed and registered programs must follow. These programs often operate without inspections, without background checks, and without required health and safety training. This creates serious risks for children. Parents may believe



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their children are in a safe environment when there may be no oversight at all.

Illegal childcare also places licensed providers at a disadvantage. Providers who follow regulations invest significant time and resources to meet safety standards, maintain training requirements, and comply with inspections. When illegal operations continue without consequences, it **undermines the integrity of the childcare system and drives down the perceived cost of care.**

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend that Maryland take stronger action beyond studying the issue. The state should actively work to **identify and close illegal childcare operations and enforce existing laws when necessary to protect children.**

At the same time, it is important to recognize that many families rely on **Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers.** Rather than leaving those caregivers outside the system, we should encourage pathways that support them in becoming safer and more connected to the regulated childcare system. Programs such as **childcare business coaching, training opportunities, and participation in scholarship programs** can help these caregivers move toward regulated care while maintaining the trusted relationships families rely on. Organization such as MSFCCA can help.

Children deserve safe environments, parents deserve transparency, and licensed providers deserve a fair and accountable system.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a **favorable report on House Bill 1574 with amendments that strengthen enforcement against illegal childcare while supporting pathways for caregivers to move into safe, regulated care.**

Thank you for your time and for your continued commitment to Maryland's children and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruby Daniels

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