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Legislative District 14
Montgomery County

Ways and Means Committee

Chair

Child Care Subcommittee

Early Childhood and
Special Education Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 748: Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early
Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - Repeal of Deadlines**
February 25, 2026

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and esteemed members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I come before you today to offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 748: Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - Repeal of Deadlines**. This bill updates and clarifies the timelines for when early childhood educators in private prekindergarten programs must meet career ladder qualification requirements established under [2024's House Bill 1441](#). HB748 makes permanent the successful career ladder framework for private providers delivering publicly funded prekindergarten and updates the implementation timelines in a thoughtful and practical way.

Under this bill, early childhood teaching assistants must meet required qualifications within three months of hire, and prekindergarten lead teachers must complete requirements within six months of qualifying for that role. These timelines are reasonable and achievable, while maintaining the high standards for quality and educational attainment. I also want to note that the introduced version of the bill contains a drafting error that inadvertently states educators may meet the qualifications within three years and six years. That was not the intent. A sponsor amendment corrects the language to reflect the intended timelines of three months and six months.

Importantly, HB748 does not lower or eliminate qualifications. Educators are still required to earn the appropriate credentials and degrees. This bill simply ensures that those requirements are tied to career progression rather than fixed calendar dates, creating a more sustainable implementation framework for private providers delivering publicly funded prekindergarten.

Maryland's early education workforce is essential to families and to children's long-term academic success. Private providers operate with different staffing structures than traditional public school systems, and flexibility in timing helps them recruit and retain passionate educators who are committed to growing into their roles.

A more flexible timeline also supports recruitment and retention. Providers can hire passionate, committed educators who are actively working toward their credentials, rather than turning away promising candidates who may need additional time to complete formal degree requirements. This is especially important for experienced educators and individuals from diverse backgrounds who may face barriers to accelerated credentialing but bring invaluable cultural competence and lived experience to the classroom.

Most importantly, children benefit from a stable, qualified, and supported early childhood workforce. By reducing turnover and supporting classroom continuity, HB 748 strengthens outcomes for young learners while preserving quality standards. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 748.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernice Mireku-North". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honorable Bernice Mireku-North, Esq.
Delegate. Maryland Legislative District 14
Maryland House of Delegates