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Testimony of Delegate Kenneth Kerr

**HB 430 – Family Child Care providers – National Guard and Military
Reserve Members – Substitute Providers**

More than 95% of childcare providers in Maryland are women. Women serve in every position in organized childcare from owning childcare centers, to operating family in-home childcare programs to teaching young children in childcare centers and homes. In recent years, the state has experienced a significant loss of childcare, losing more than 15% of its providers and 5.5% of its capacity—some 12,000 slots since 2020. Childcare shortages in the state have created a \$2.2 billion annual impact driven by workforce disruptions, lost tax revenue, and the high cost of quality care.

Factor into this scenario the requirement that home childcare providers are not allowed to miss more than 20 days in any given year. While the requirement may make sense as we consider the need for continuity in children's care, the requirement poses a significant barrier to women serving in any of the reserves while also operating in-home childcare programs that provide financial support to their families and quality child care in this communities.

HB 430 makes it possible for women who are committed to serving their country to also operate in-home childcare businesses that serve their families and their communities. This legislation allows childcare providers who are members of the National Guard or military reserves to designate a

substitute to provide reliable substitute care while the providers are absent for required training and/or active service. The substitute will be authorized to provide care for no more than 45 days in a 12-month period.

HB 430 balances the continued need for quality childcare slots with women's commitment to military service and their capacity to run childcare programs that generate income and offer care to their own children.

I respectfully request a favorable vote.