



Date: 3-4-26

House Ways and Means Committee

House Bill 1034 Child Care Entities – Child Abuse and Neglect – Training and Reporting Requirements

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Wilkins and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Center for Hope, we respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1034. The Center for Hope works every day with children and families impacted by abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. We partner closely with child advocacy centers, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and child protective services to ensure that children who are at risk receive timely, trauma-informed, and coordinated intervention. For these reasons, we support HB 1034.

The bill would require a child care provider to:

- Complete certain training on the identification, prevention, and reporting of child abuse; and
- Provide certain notice or make certain reports of suspected child abuse or neglect; and generally relating to child abuse and neglect.

Importance of Mandated Reporters

Mandated reporters, including child care providers, are essential to the early identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect. By expanding the definition of mandated reporters, we can increase protection for children. A greater number of trained individuals means a higher likelihood of recognizing signs of abuse early. More timely reports to child protective services will enable quicker responses to suspected abuse, ultimately preventing further harm.

Importance of Training

House Bill 1034 emphasizes the need for ongoing training on the identification and prevention of child abuse. This proactive approach will not only empower child care providers to act decisively when necessary but will also foster a culture of awareness and vigilance. By mandating training every two years, we ensure that providers remain informed about the latest best practices and legal requirements. This continuous education is vital for building a robust response system to child abuse, ultimately leading to safer environments for our children. Training prepares mandated reporters to handle challenging situations effectively, leading to better outcomes for children.

In conclusion, House Bill 1034 represents a significant step forward in our collective efforts to protect children from abuse and neglect. By strengthening the role of child care providers and prioritizing training on the identification, prevention, and reporting of child abuse, we can create safer, more supportive environments for Maryland's children. By protecting children now, we pave the way for healthier, more resilient future generations, contributing to improved societal outcomes. *For these reasons, Center for Hope respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1034.*

Respectfully,

Alison D'Alessandro

Center for Hope-Senior Policy & Program Specialist

Adalessa@lifebridgehealth.org 410-601-4673