

Greenbelt Children's Center



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Support HB 608 February 5, 2021

To Delegate Solomon and Members of the Committee,

Child care is critical to the economic recovery for Maryland as more parents of young children get called back to work. Maryland has lost many providers due to permanent closures and more are on the brink of disaster.

Child care centers have been operating during the pandemic at very diminished enrollment and revenue. Parents are very reluctant to send their child to group care. Providers suffer increases because of cleaning and supply costs that have risen astronomically, (latex gloves have gone from \$32 per case to \$80, for example). We must retain our educated and experienced staff because there is no pool of qualified applicants to choose from in our industry. We cannot combine groups at the beginning of the day or end of the day, so our staffing costs are higher even with lower enrollment. Our staff must be paid to clean and sanitize before and after our opening hours to keep everyone safe. We cannot continue much longer as we watch our ability to survive the pandemic dwindle.

I support the Department of Commerce in providing funds based on the eligibility requirements and the purposes listed in HB 608.

I would like to see this include a Heroes Bonus of \$1000 for each credentialed child care worker who is working during the pandemic, supporting Maryland families. There is already a mechanism to pay them with MSDE. Credentialed Providers should receive this Heroes Bonus from the state. Please show child care providers that Maryland supports and appreciates them for risking their health every day to support young children and their working parents. Child care providers need to be recognized as essential and important to Maryland's public infrastructure.