

February 21, 2023

**Testimony Concerning SB 873:
“Child Care Provider Stabilization Program – Established”**

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment

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Child care is part of the fabric of our communities - necessary so that parents can confidently go to work and children are in safe, nurturing learning environments. Without accessible child care, our entire economy is threatened. But we can’t have child care without a workforce. We won’t have a child care workforce if they cannot make the professional wage they deserve.

SB 873 calls for monthly payments to licensed child care providers who are willing and able to enroll children who receive a subsidy through the Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP). This helps families to have access, and child care providers to make enough to pay their bills. I urge your support for this legislation.

Through this bill, early childhood educators could receive as much as \$2,500 per month to be used for cleaning and food supplies, early childhood educator wages, and the ongoing expenses. This bill is well-named – it DOES provide stabilization to child care, and parents are counting on it.

In Prince George’s and Anne Arundel Counties where CRC serves child care providers, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of child care programs. Child care has always operated with razor thin margins, but the Pandemic made it impossible for many of these small businesses to recover. Now, as the regional Child Care Resource Center, we are working hard to support existing child care programs as well as provide technical assistance and coaching to potential providers. Stabilization funds are one more tool we have to help the provider community!

Child care providers we work with are committed to quality, relationship-based practices strong so that families feel supported and children enter school ready to learn. We must continue to take steps to stabilize the child care sector and the well-being of people who work in child care, and we must also rebuild child care better than before. It makes strong communities for all of us, whether we have young children ourselves or not.

The child care crisis is not over in Maryland. Thank you for your leadership and your support for child care through recent General Assembly sessions. There’s more to do and we can do it together. Thank you for supporting SB 873.

