**March 14, 2022**

**Favorable Testimony Concerning Support for:**

**SB0919 Child Care Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund – Established**

**Submitted to the Senate Committee on Budget and Taxation**

**Your first and last name**

**The name of your program**

**Address of your program**

**Phone number to reach you**

**Email address to reach you**

**We urge your support for SB0919.**

Child care providers across the nation continue to struggle as they recover during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Child care providers are in crisis, and so are families, and Prince George’s County is no exception.

Insert some things about you/your program, for instance:

* That you are licensed
* If you are in EXCELS or not in EXCELS
* If you are or are able to enroll families who pay with scholarship/subsidy or not able to enroll families who pay with scholarship/subsidy (note – this bill says the loan would be available to those who pay with scholarship/subsidy)
* Your licensed capacity and how many children are enrolled now
* If you have staff, how many you would have ordinarily and how many you have now

In Prince George’s County, area child care providers like me are experiencing deep challenges with

funding/finances, staffing and enrollment which are all totally intertwined. The stabilization funds offered in 2021 were an important step. There is more to be done.

Just before the pandemic began, Prince George’s County was home to 747 family child care programs and 377 centers. When Governor Hogan ordered the closure of child care centers and family child care homes due to COVID-19, the Maryland State Department of Education created an application process for child care programs to be available to serve essential workers. Our county’s 1,124 licensed child care programs shrank to 435 programs for essential workers only. Now, across our great county we have only 632 family child care programs and 299 centers.

We need help rebuilding our businesses and keeping our quality, relationship-based practices strong, so we can be there for working parents and for young children. The quality of child care, and the experience of the birth-to-five years, are crucial to school readiness and supporting working families. This includes investments in our physical spaces, in centers and in family child care homes.

SB0919 creates a revolving loan fund so that providers in centers and family child care that enroll families paying with scholarship can make necessary and often costly changes to their physical spaces.

Child care providers in Prince George’s County would benefit from the availability of this revolving loan fund. Though “rural communities” are one of the items on the priority list, the rest of the criteria does indeed describe (our community/our program/our neighborhood/the families counting on me) including:

* Child care providers in underserved communities
* Child care providers in areas lacking child care slots
* Child care providers that serve primarily low-income families in areas of high poverty
* Child care providers that serve children with special needs
* Child care providers that enroll infants and toddlers

Insert your own ideas about what a difference it would make to have access to a revolving loan fund to make changes to your program’s physical spaces, with 5 years to repay. What would you be able to do with a loan like this?

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.

Thank you for your leadership for our community. Together we can help child care programs to stay open successfully and offer more choices for families, when we make sure that all the pieces and parts of policy ideas come together.