



## Testimony in Support of House Bill 608

### Early Childhood Education - Child Care Provider Support Grant Program (The Child Care Provider Support Act)

TO: Chair Kaiser, Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Demaune A. Millard, President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore

DATE: February 5, 2021

Family League of Baltimore (Family League) strongly supports House Bill 608 as it would provide grants to qualifying childcare providers that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This additional funding would help assist daycare providers that were operating before March 2020 and managed continue operating after September 30<sup>th</sup> in spite of the considerable challenges and constricted revenue brought on by this global health crisis. The goal of Early Childhood Education Centers is to provide a safe educational environment for children under school age to learn and be prepared to enter school. Many families were forced to remove their child(ren) from daily early childhood education, resulting a decline in attendance and enrollment. Providers had to make staff cuts and fell behind on day-to-day expenses to stay afloat and to continue providing the remaining children with the proper supports. The grant funds provided by this bill would enable qualifying providers to cover payroll, rent/mortgage payments, utilities, and other necessary expenses and would allow center to keep their doors open for children that are still able to attend.

This bill prioritizes eligible grantees in high poverty zip codes, ensuring that Early Childhood Education Centers in Baltimore City could be recipients. This is important because of the number of high poverty areas that are in the City and present an opportunity to shore up an early learning ecosystem that is already challenged provide children with adequate care and education prior to entering school. Additionally, as it has been proven that children thrive the best in stress free environments, this grant could help address some of the consider that have burden providers during the pandemic.

As the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions to align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. Our policy advocacy work is also guided by and in support of the Governor's Office Of Crime Prevention Youth And Victim Services' [Results for Child Well-Being](#). Through our Strategic Planning Process, we have prioritized three of these results areas, focusing on the success of Baltimore City's children in school; the economic stability of families; and the safety of communities for children, youth, and families. We support HB 608 in particular because of its alignment with these result areas by working to ensure that "Children Enter School Ready to Learn" and "Communities are Safe for Children, Youth and Families."

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