

Submitter: Herlin Alvarez

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2727

Dear Chair Reynolds and Vice-Chairs Hoa and Sharf, members of the committee,

My name is Herlin Alvarez. I run a certified child care in Marion County. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for House Bills 2027 and 3005.

Right now is when I need this help the most.

I have been working in the area of early childhood education for almost 7 years. Throughout that time I have faced many barriers and one of them is financial. When I did child care in a less professional way (un certified) it was a little easier because I worked alone and although I served a few children, my expenses were not so many. When I decided to do it in a more professional way, I realized that I needed to invest more and prepare myself better professionally and to change the environment.

I changed my license to a certified license so I could serve more families. I had to hire more people. That is another of the barriers. Finding the right people who like to do this job and do their best. I have always paid more than the minimum wage but even so people are frustrated because they say that they have to do a lot and the pay is very little. I agree with them because it is a great responsibility that we have and our payment is not much.

I used to work with babies but I received many calls requesting care for older children. In September I started working with children from 3 to 5 years old and now I receive many calls looking for baby care. That is why I decided to move to a bigger place and change the type of license to be able to serve more ages, but it is becoming more difficult for us than we thought. We haven't been able to open the new place yet for various reasons. The city permits are taking too long, the facility is costing a lot of money to improve, and the money we had earmarked for classroom furniture and equipment has been spent on remodeling the facility. Also, we haven't been able to find staff yet. We applied for a grant for this place and we are hoping that we will be approved because my dream is to open several places in the future for all the need that there is.

We have a responsibility to take care that future citizens are in a safe place and that we meet all their needs. The security, enriched environment and business practices of this business are very expensive and many times child care providers have very little money left. I have even spoken with other providers who do not even have enough to pay themselves a salary. Many prefer to work alone so as not to have so

many expenses, but that way they cannot provide services to many children. I think if it weren't for the subsidies we've received, maybe we wouldn't be in this business anymore or I would have had to lay off my employees.

Going back to the shortage of child care providers, I think it is due to many things. For example, lack of good financial compensation, a lot of pressure but lack of support from the agencies that regulate homes and centers, lack of adequate staff, lack of financial and educational support for those who want to start, and the list goes on. HB 2727 and HB 3005 would help reduce the bureaucratic and financial barriers we face and help us serve more families. I hope you will support both of these bills.

Thank you.

Herlin Alvarez  
PRO Marion County Training Facilitator  
Early Start Daycare and Preschool Certified Teacher