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District of Columbia Zoning Commission
Case No. 15-17 (Text Amendment – Child Development Homes)
441 4th St NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20001

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Statement of Support

I, Julie Lujan, am writing in support of the text amendment to allow Expanded Child Development Homes for up to 12 children. I opened Lanier Lullabies Child Development Home, in Ward 1 in 2007. After 3 years in business, I closed the home and opened Lanier Lullabies Child Development Center in 2010. One of the reasons I closed the home was the 6 child maximum as well as the limit of only being permitted to care for 2 children under the age of 2. I was delighted to see the amendment pass allowing up to 6 children under the age of 2 years old permitted. In April 2015 I reopened my Child Development Home due to the changes in the regulations.

I decided to open a child development home when my 3rd daughter was born in 2006. My other children did not attend daycare but I knew I would need to return to work. I didn't like the thought of my child being at a large daycare that felt institutional and like a school, so I decided to open my home and provide care in the type of environment I would want my own young child growing up in. I found that many other parents shared my views and were happy to find a home setting for their children.

There is a high demand for child care in my neighborhood. I receive calls daily from parents needing care and asking to be put on my wait list. I was able to fill all of the spaces for my child development home in a matter of weeks and start a wait list. There are 2 large condominiums being completed in the 2 block radius of my house which will increase the demand for child care in the neighborhood, as well as plans for more condominium development on Columbia Rd. Not only has there been a huge increase of the amount of families of young infants and toddlers, but the families are staying in Adams Morgan as their children reach school age. I have 4 children of my own, ages 5 -14 years old, and value being able to raise them in DC. Adams Morgan is a wonderful place to raise a family. There are parks, the zoo, convenient shopping, museums close by and access to public transportation and now schools that are improving and keeping the families in the neighborhood. When I had my first child in 2001 I never would have imagined being able to send her to not only a quality public elementary school, but a fantastic middle and high school.

This amendment is a very important step because it would fulfill some of the demand for quality care in the neighborhood. I know many parents become very worried when they learn

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that they should have put their child on wait lists before they even conceive. I have many children who have been on the waitlist for years

Two of my current families live on the same block as my home. The improvement to the quality of life by having childcare right in your neighborhood is enormous. I have found that parents value the sense of community when their child attends a child care setting in their own neighborhood in a home. They get a sense of comfort that their child is in a home as opposed to a more institutionalized school type setting.

My hours of operation are from 8am-6pm. Most children are dropped off between 8-9:30 am and picked up between 5-6pm. I find that most of the families walk and are able to store their strollers under our porch for convenience and there is not an increase in car traffic. I value and follow OSSE's licensing regulations. I agree that regulations are crucial for creating and maintaining a safe and ideal setting for children.

I don't think the extended home will have a negative impact in communities. The children already live there. Providing more convenient care in neighborhoods will alleviate some of the commuting parents are currently required to do when they need to go outside of their neighborhood for drop off and pick-ups. Through my experience of having a staff of 9 at Lanier Lullabies, (the center that I directed) there is not an issue with employees driving and parking. In the past 8 years I have had only 1 staff member who has driven. The others take public transportation or walk.

Child Development Homes offer a unique option for parents – care in a provider's home, in their neighborhood, in a small, warm, and welcoming environment. If we have the option of expanding our programs for up to 12 children, we will be able to offer this option to more children and families in DC.

Sincerely,

Julie Lujan