



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

Maryland State Child Care Association

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The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 4500 members working in the field of early childhood. We believe children are our most important natural resources and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

February 11, 2021
Informational
SB 486
Finance

Thanks to Chairs and the esteemed members of the Finance Committee for the opportunity to share testimony.

Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is concerned about SB 486 as written to include child care businesses.

Requiring an essential employer to give a written statement regarding certain hazard pay paid to certain essential workers at certain intervals; requiring an essential employer to take certain actions related to occupational safety and health during an emergency; authorizing an essential worker to refuse to fulfill a certain responsibility under certain circumstances; prohibiting an essential employer from retaliating or taking other adverse action against an essential worker or other worker for certain actions.

Child care businesses are already struggling and function on the narrowest of margins as they are private businesses providing a public service with almost no public investment. An emergency, such as the COVID 19 pandemic has impacted our community of close to 8000 businesses with over 1200 not reopened.

Insufficient child care negatively impacts not only parents, but employers, and taxpayers when families do not have the child care they need, parents' work productivity falls, resulting in costs to parents, their employers, and, ultimately, taxpayers. Insufficient child care also leads to increases in illegal, unlicensed child care which result in poor outcomes for children. Child care small businesses are already struggling to stay afloat. We adhere to 50 pages of strict regulations, Covid 19 crisis has disproportionately fallen on the shoulders of women in the workforce due to the pandemic and child care related issues, critical workforce shortage in child care which leads to insufficient access for parents to much needed child care programs. Maryland is also experiencing the workforce shortage in this critical need area. The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted the child care workforce as the risk of exposure has been too great for some teachers, therefore causing even more shortages in the field. Critical workforce shortages impact parent's access to child care. Child care businesses do not have a pool of substitutes nor can they automate, and children should not have inconsistent caregivers, teachers as it is not best practice.

How will child care businesses be able to provide hazard pay without raising costs to parents? How can we allow all of this criteria proposed in SB 486 when parents and children depend on consistency to work and to prepare children for kindergarten and life through quality childhood experiences in child care programs? We will lose more child care businesses.

Finally, MSCCA's goal is to be sure children and families have access to choices for quality child care programs. MSCCA believes this bill will cause undue hardship to struggling child care businesses and the burden of costs will be passed onto parents, who bare the already unaffordable cost of child care.