



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 24, 2022

**HB 1100
Child Care Providers and Employees - Bonuses**

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

SUPPORT

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1100. The Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 1100 would establish fund to provide retention bonuses for credentialed child care provider employees. The bill also establishes a fund to provide for new hire bonuses. The bonus funds shall be administered through the Maryland State Department of Education, with the Department also establishing award procedures.

Maryland's child care providers, one of the most essential service providers for Maryland families, have also one of the most beleaguered sectors during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. These grants would provide much needed support to this essential sector of Marylander's economy by enabling the retention of a certificated workforce. Hundreds of providers have been forced to close their doors in Maryland since early 2020, leading to less options for child care access for working families. A significant part of their struggle has been the retention and hiring of qualified child care employees.

Child Care is an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Additionally, the Church supports this bill as a part of its priority interest in alleviating poverty in our state, as enabling working parents' continued access to child care services is an imperative part of combating poverty. Often, a barrier to sustainable and full-time employment is the availability and affordability of reliable child care services. The State should thus do all it can to support access to child care services for working parents.

The Conference appreciates your consideration, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1100.