



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 24, 2022

**HB 725
Children – Therapeutic Child Care Program – Funding**

House Ways & Means Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 725. 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 725 would establish the Maryland Therapeutic Child Care Program. The program would provide funding for each child served who has developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning.

Children are the core of the family unit and any legislation that seeks to stabilize their child care environment should be considered a priority. Stable child care is an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Moreover, 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.

This bill would provide specialized child care to those children who most need attention in addressing their cognitive, emotional, psychosocial and language development. Children with disabilities should be provided funding streams within our educational landscape that prioritize their development. It is for these reasons we request a favorable report on House Bill 725.