



Testimony Concerning SB 362
“Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024”
Submitted to the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 29, 2024

Position: Oppose

Maryland Family Network (MFN) opposes the provision in SB 362 that would enable the Administration to implement an enrollment freeze in the Child Care Scholarship Program (CCS).

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

The 2024 BRFA would essentially repeal the core of legislation enacted by the General Assembly just last year. It would reassert unilateral authority on the part of MSDE to impose an enrollment freeze on CCS and re-establish a wait list.

That is deeply disturbing, given MSDE’s history with enrollment freezes and the historically poor performance of RESI, its CCS budget forecaster. Enrollment freezes are profoundly destructive not just to individual families but to CCS as a whole. The last time MSDE imposed an enrollment freeze was in 2011. The program remained closed to many otherwise eligible families until 2018—seven long years later. At the high mark of that period, more than 20,000 children languished on a wait list.

Meanwhile, over the course of three fiscal years (FY 16 – FY 18), MSDE underspent more than \$55 million that had been appropriated for CCS by the General Assembly.

MFN respectfully urges the Committee strike page 8 line 25 through page 9 line 23 of SB 362, thereby retaining the General Assembly’s direct oversight and maximizing its ability to prevent destructive enrollment freezes in the future.

