



## House Bill 831

### *Common Ownership Communities and Zoning Authorities - Operation of Family Child Care Homes - Limitations*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

**WITH AMENDMENTS**

Date: February 20, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 831 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill places certain restrictions on cooperative housing corporations and local jurisdictions in relation regulating the number of children allowed in a family child care and large family child care homes.

The need for additional child care capacity is something recognized not only by counties, but also largely by the workforce they employ. The recent report from the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Firefighting and EMS in Maryland, highlighted child care as one of the top three barriers to recruitment and retention of career and volunteer firefighters. Without adequate, affordable, and safe child care infrastructure, the quality of life for our mutual constituents will suffer.

In the bill, counties offer the following procedural amendment to restrain county authority but retain the ability to reflect infrastructure limitations where they pose a major concern:

On page 6, in line 18, after “(B)” insert “OTHER THAN AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION,”;

After line 21 insert:

“(C) A LOCAL JURISDICTION MAY, ONLY UPON A SPECIFIC FINDING THAT EXPANSION OF CHILD CARE CAPACITY TO THE NUMBER AUTHORIZED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WOULD CREATE AN UNDUE EFFECT ON SAFETY OR HEALTH OF THE IMMEDIATE AND SURROUNDING AREA, RETAIN OR ESTABLISH A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN FOR WHICH A FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME OR LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME MAY PROVIDE.”

The central concern for counties is that child care homes may be in areas where there may not be sufficient infrastructure to support them. Creating a high standard for such a finding, as suggested, would allow the jurisdiction to balance these competing goals effectively.

Counties support the goal of HB 831 and share in the urgency of advancing child care options. For this reason, MACo urges the committee to give HB 831 a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**.