



## Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 59

### Safe Sleep for Infants – Awareness and Certification

**To:** Chair Pamela Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee  
**From:** Demaune A. Millard, President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore  
**Date:** February 8, 2024

Family League of Baltimore (Family League) supports Senate Bill 59 as it would require the Maryland Department of Health to develop and implement a public awareness campaign to promote education regarding safe sleep for infants. In addition, SB 59 will establish a Maryland Safe Sleep Certification Program and require childcare centers to be certified by the Program. Lastly, it would require hospitals and freestanding birthing centers to be certified by the Cribs for Kids' National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification program.

Family League serves as an implementing partner in B'more Healthy Babies (BHB), a collective impact strategy aimed at addressing infant mortality while further closing the disparity gaps in birth outcomes. In alignment with BHB, to ensure that babies are born healthy we support legislation that raises the critical awareness of Safe Sleep for Infants. This bill aims to have the Department of Health implement an awareness campaign that would promote education around safe sleep for infants. In addition to the campaign, the bill would establish a safe sleep certification program and require childcare centers to be certified by the program. Hospitals and Birthing Centers will also be required to be certified by the Cribs for Kids' National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification program to ensure that safe sleep education is provided to patients.

With this law in place the campaign would specifically target high risk for SIDS and those most in need of education regarding safe sleep for infants. Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is one of the leading causes of post neonatal mortality, which is why it is important to provide education and certifications to Baltimoreans and Marylanders alike. Unfortunately, the city of Baltimore has seen an increase in the number of SIDS since the pandemic, in 2023 there was a total of 18 which is the same amount from 2022.

In FY23, Health Care Access Maryland's (HCAM) Care Coordination program delivered 346 free cribs in Baltimore and provided safe sleep education and environmental assessments to 467 residents. So far in FY24, the Safe Sleep team has already delivered 219 cribs. Care coordination plays a crucial role in connecting pregnant and postpartum individuals to resources, spreading the message about safe sleep in communities, and providing families with a safe sleep environment for their infant.

As the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions to align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities.

Our policy focus is also guided by and in support of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention Youth and Victim Services' Results for Child Well-Being. Through our strategic planning process, we have prioritized three of these results areas, focusing on the success of Baltimore's children in school; the economic stability of families; and the safety of communities for children, youth, and families. We support SB59 in particular because of its alignment with the result areas that work to ensure "Babies Are Born Healthy"

*For more information contact Keontae Kells, Executive Administrator [kkells@familyleague.org](mailto:kkells@familyleague.org)*