



**Caring For Maryland's Most  
Important Natural Resource™**

## **Maryland State Child Care Association**

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*The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 5000 members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.*

### **Testimony: HB 600 Education-Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund-Alterations Submitted to: Ways and Means Committee February 7, 2024**

Maryland State Child Care Association enthusiastically supports HB 600. We thank sponsor, Delegate Palakovich Carr for her leadership and support of the child care industry workforce, children and families.

Child care is an economic and equity imperative. HB 600 addresses economic and equity imperatives with important alterations to the existing state quality initiatives by increasing employment service hours, which builds workforce capacity along with prioritizing and expanding opportunities for our diverse immigrant teachers.

The Office of Child Care Workforce Advancement Branch advertises, recruits, and supports the child care community through the CCCPDF, which pays for full academic degrees, including two- and four-year degrees and master's level degrees, including books in early childhood education and related fields. Additionally, to be eligible or qualify for the CCCPDF you must be participating in the Office of Child Care Maryland Credential Program specifically for child care staff, at a level two or higher. However, the service commitment is only ten hours per week upon graduation from institutes of higher education in a licensed child care program. The service commitment hours do not meet the needs of child care businesses who have a critical workforce shortage supply nor is it equitable for funding invested. The CCCPDF should function more in step with the TEACH for America model to give back equivalent service, especially when the resources used are directly related to child care.

We are competing with Starbucks, Target, Washington DC and even our own state public schools for employees as child care lacks sufficient compensation and benefits. Child care is a tuition dependent business, and our industry is struggling with a decline in programs, providers, and overall workforce. HB 600 will help build capacity and a qualified workforce allowing priority for new students and students whose first language is not English to succeed.

The child care industry continues to struggle with critical workforce shortages and the recovery has lagged behind other businesses. ARPA funds have been exhausted. The child care industry has not fully recovered from the pandemic and was tenuous prior to the pandemic. According to MSDE, child care has lost over 800 programs. Additionally, numerous programs have demand for child care services, but cannot open space/classrooms due to the critical workforce shortages plaguing small business, especially the child care industry. Providers and advocates say recruiting and retaining workers is now one of their biggest challenges.

According to Indeed, the demand for child care workers remains high. In January 2021, job postings on Indeed were back to pre-pandemic levels for child care roles, and they have remained above pre-pandemic levels ever since. In fact, by September 2023, child care job postings on Indeed were still more than 50 percent above their pre-pandemic levels. The number of job postings for child care positions is much higher, relative to pre-pandemic levels, than other pandemic-affected roles, such as retail and sales.

For decades, we have undervalued and underinvested in our child care system, and now our economy—[and our most vulnerable workers](#)—are paying the price. It will take the combined efforts of the federal government, state leaders, and businesses to ensure every family has access to affordable, high-quality childcare that can move the country and its economy forward. HB 600 makes an impact by building capacity and equity in the workforce.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as [many as 100,000](#) Americans have been forced to stay home from work each month because of child care problems. The economic toll now amounts [to \\$122 billion](#) each year in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue. A recent report from the Government Accountability Office found that child care obligations [represent a massive hurdle](#) for workers struggling to access job training.

Maryland has led the way in creating amazing initiatives to invest in cultivating more child care providers and devoting resources to the CCCPDF each year. HB 600 expands the opportunities and prioritizes funding along with increasing service hours to build workforce capacity in a critical workforce shortage industry. Prioritizing the CCCPDF approaches that increase, at a faster pace, our diverse workforce to achieve higher education goals will create a stronger, more culturally supportive workforce.

Native language degree programs are available and very successful. You will receive testimony from Clackamas College in Oregon about their Early Childhood Education degree fully available in Spanish online. Clackamas is partnering with other states to provide this opportunity for ECE fully in Spanish including, New York. Also, North Seattle College and College of the Lakes in Illinois also have degree programs fully in Spanish to meet the diverse need of this population.

HB 600 takes necessary steps to build capacity and a qualified workforce with an equity lens and begins alignment with both the Maryland Educator Shortage Reduction Act and the recent AIB December 2023 recommendations related to Blueprint for Maryland's Future Pillar 1.

The important change to increase service hours, along with the need for native language degrees and coursework addressed in HB 600 is a step in the right direction to supporting the essential and diverse child care workforce.

MSCCA urges a favorable report.