



**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 1139 Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program-Permanent Establishment Submitted to: Ways and Means Committee February 21, 2024

MSCCA fully supports HB 1139.

Family child care programs are essential to the workforce and communities. This important legislation recognizes the success of Growing Family Child Care pilot program in Maryland. HB 1139 establishes the Growing Family Child Care program in permanently in law and provides necessary funding in budget to continue to support family child care providers throughout the state and ultimately benefit families and children they serve.

Family Child Care is an important option for families. HB 1139 is critical in supporting working families in developmentally appropriate settings and provides funding for the program to build capacity. Many areas of the state have child care deserts where child care, especially family child care is desperately needed.

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/providers. The cost of child care is increasing to keep up with costs of inflation and as it does, female unemployment decreases by 5%. Already, 160,000 women have left the workforce due to primarily child care and transportation issues.

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, quality childcare that can move the country and its economy forward. HB 1139 makes an impact by building capacity which leads to more access to child care for families.

Child care is an important economic and equity imperative and child care providers are the backbone of society. HB 1139 supports the growth of family child care in our neighborhoods and communities as they are the fabric of family support, while also driving the economy.

MSCCA asks for a favorable report.