



Testimony - HB 185, Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations
Favorable

Senate Budget & Tax Committee

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Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Guzzone & Members of the Senate Budget & Tax Committee:

SEIU Local 500, as one of Maryland's largest public sector unions representing over 23,000 workers, expresses our strong support for HB Bill 185. Our union represents the support staff in Montgomery County Public Schools, Family Child Care Providers, Faculty and Staff at several Maryland colleges and universities, staff at non-profits, and many other working people across the region.

If passed, House Bill 185 would address the ongoing need for funding critical therapeutic childcare programs. These programs would provide grants to childcare providers who specialize in serving children under the age of 6 with developmental delays, physical disabilities, or challenges in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. While there are initial costs associated with the therapeutic childcare grant programs, investing in early intervention can result in significant long-term savings by preventing more severe issues that may require expensive services in the future, such as intensive mental health care.

Preparing Maryland for a prosperous future starts with understanding that our youngest residents must receive the support they need today in order to grow into the adults who will strengthen our communities and economy. Thankfully, we already know what children need. Advances in early childhood development science show that the early years are a critical period when the brain is actively developing, much like the construction of a house. The relationships and experiences children have during this time form the foundation for the skills they need to stay healthy and succeed in school, relationships, and the workforce.

House Bill 185 will help keep families together, save children's lives, and ensure they receive the care they deserve. We urge all members of the House to support HB 185, and we thank Delegate Mireku-North for her leadership on this issue. We ask for your vote to pass and a favorable report by this committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
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