



Testimony - SB 462, State Board of Education - Membership -
Early Childhood Development Professional
Favorable with Amendments

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

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Honorable Chairman Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, 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. We urge a FAVORABLE Report on SB 462 – **State Board of Education - Membership - Early Childhood Development Professional**. We would also like to thank the sponsors for their support of the early childhood community.

While Maryland's educational policies, particularly in the Pre-K-12 system, are an important focus, early childhood education and care often do not receive the attention they deserve. The current expertise within the State Board of Education is primarily focused on the Pre-K-12 system, which can sometimes result in a gap in understanding how to best support young children, ages 0-5, in the early stages of their development. This gap limits the ability to address quality care and instruction for our youngest learners.

Early childhood education and care are critical priorities for Maryland's future, as they play a pivotal role in setting children up for success, both in school and in life. High-quality early care and education have a profound impact on school readiness, early literacy, and lifelong health and well-being. Research shows that the experiences children have from birth to age five shape their cognitive, social, and emotional development. The foundation laid in these first five years is crucial for everything that follows, influencing long-term outcomes in both educational achievement and overall life success.

The addition of an early childhood development professional to the State Board of Education would ensure that early care and education are fully considered in the development of policies that affect the entire education system. Decisions made by the board regarding Pre-K-12 education, as well as regulatory decisions concerning licensure, certification, leadership, financing, and standards, all have far-reaching effects on the early care and education system. Yet, without the input of a subject matter expert in early childhood development, these decisions may not fully reflect the unique needs and realities of young children and their families.

By adding a professional with expertise in early childhood development, Maryland will ensure that early childhood education and care receive the attention and support they deserve. This addition will foster a more holistic approach to education policy that prioritizes the developmental needs of children from birth, recognizing the critical importance of these early years in setting the stage for future success.

Therefore, we request a favorable report on SB 462. Thank you for your consideration.

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