



Testimony - HB 477, State Department of Education - Family Child Care Homes and
Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis
Favorable with Amendments
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
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Honorable Chairman Feldman & Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents over 23,000 workers across Maryland including family child care providers. Our members have a role in the lives of Marylanders from cradle to career. We wish to express our strong support for Maryland House Bill 477, as amended, which directs the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the State's regulatory framework governing family child care homes and child care centers.

Access to high-quality, affordable child care is vital for Maryland's working families and the development of our youngest residents. However, existing regulatory requirements may pose unnecessary barriers to child care providers, limiting the availability of services. HB 477 takes a critical step toward evaluating these regulations to ensure they strike the right balance between maintaining safety and fostering a sustainable child care industry.

The amended bill improves upon the original version by removing specific changes to adult-to-child ratios and instead focusing on a thorough, data-driven review of child care regulations. In addition, we support ensuring that all stakeholders including child care councils, the nonprofits, and unions that represent child care providers are consulted in the study's implementation. This approach ensures that any policy adjustments are informed by careful analysis rather than preemptive mandates with input from all involved. Importantly, the bill now requires MSDE to:

- Examine regulations that affect the ability of individuals to register as family child care providers or receive licenses to operate child care centers.
- Assess how these regulations impact both quality child care and the financial viability of providers.
- Compare Maryland's framework with those of other states to identify best practices.
- Determine whether existing rules contribute to safer environments, higher-quality early education, or barriers to child care availability.
- Consult with key stakeholders—including the Office of Child Care Advisory Council, early childhood education experts, private providers, nonprofits, and labor representatives—to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.

By adopting this structured, research-based approach, HB 477 provides a responsible path forward to support both child care providers and families in Maryland.

We ask you all to support HB 477 and thank Delegates Barnes and McCaskill for their leadership on this issue. We urge you to vote yes and provide a favorable report on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

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