

**SEIU Local 500\_HB477\_FAV.pdf**

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Position: FAV

Hearing Testimony March 27, 2025  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Service Employees International Union, Local 500

HB477

State Department of Education - Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia, including Family Child Care Providers. SEIU Local 500 supports HB477, and we thank the sponsors for their unwavering leadership and support of the child care community, advocating for the welfare of children and families.

Affordable, high-quality child care is a foundational element of both our economy and the success of Maryland's future. Yet, most families continue to struggle to find or afford child care that meets their needs. HB862 recognizes this reality and aims to find meaningful solutions that will support the workforce, bolster Maryland's businesses, and enhance our educational outcomes. Child care is central to the success of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, particularly the mixed delivery goals, which cannot be achieved without accessible child care.

The evidence is clear: child care impacts businesses and the economy in profound ways. Employers across Maryland require a dependable workforce, and affordable child care plays a key role in supporting that workforce. Businesses lose both profit and productivity when employees cannot access affordable, reliable child care. Maryland must work to remove barriers that are preventing new child care businesses from opening and existing child care businesses from being driven out of business.

As amended in the House, HB477 requires the Maryland Department of Education to conduct a thorough analysis of the State's regulatory requirements for child care facilities. In conducting this analysis, the Department must specifically look at current regulations that have created barriers for private providers across Maryland. Safety remains paramount, so the Department must determine whether the regulation results in or contributes to a safer environment for children, the quality of early childhood education, or a significant impact on the ability of a provider to open and operate a child care facility. Additionally, the Department must look at best practices from other states and regions.

The *State of the Economy* report from the Comptroller of Maryland, released on December 31, 2024, underscores the urgency of addressing the lack of child care availability in Maryland. According to the

report, Maryland's labor force participation remains 3.8% below pre-pandemic levels, and our state has lost over 1,200 child care businesses—representing a 15.5% decline. Over 12,000 licensed child care slots have also been lost, or a 5.5% decrease in capacity. This is not just a child care crisis; it is a workforce and economic crisis. When parents cannot access affordable, consistent child care, they miss work, leading to lower household incomes and job loss.

Investing in affordable child care is an investment in early education, which helps children succeed in school and life. Yet, as noted in the Comptroller's report, child care in Maryland continues to decline, threatening our progress on the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. HB477 seeks to address these challenges by requiring MSDE to examine critical issues, such as identifying barriers to a fiscally sustainable child care system, measuring the effectiveness of current regulations and addressing the need for adequate and sustainable resources for the child care infrastructure. This effort will provide valuable insights into how we can improve both the affordability and quality of child care in Maryland, ensuring that working parents can fully participate in the labor force.

We believe that the requirements of the bill and the resulting recommendations will help remove regulatory barriers that have led to the child care crisis our state is currently in. We would suggest one amendment (ATTACHED) that requires the Department to work in consultation with the Office of Child Care Advisory Council, state and local Early Childhood Advisory Councils, private child care providers, and non-profits and unions who represent child care providers. We believe that this addition would ensure that appropriate stakeholders are involved in the process and that the resulting analysis will be even more efficacious.

The Comptroller's report stresses the need for policymakers and the public to understand the shifts and changes within Maryland's child care industry in order to solve the challenges faced by working parents. This bill is a step forward in realizing the goal of a more effective child care system in our state.

Therefore we request a favorable report on HB477.

Amendment to HB477

On page 5, after line 19 insert, **“(5) IN CARRYING OUT THE STUDY, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSULT WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO: (i) THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL; (ii) STATE AND LOCAL EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCILS; (iii) PRIVATE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS; AND (iv) NONPROFITS AND UNIONS WHO REPRESENT CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.**

# **HB477 MALMB Testimony.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa Kovacs

Position: FAV



**Local power, collective voice  
for Maryland's children, youth and families**

March 27, 2025

**SUPPORT – HB0477 – State Department of Education - Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis**

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards, I am writing in support of **HB0477 – State Department of Education - Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis** which will require the Maryland State Department of Education to conduct a thorough analysis of the State's regulatory framework for child care facilities. This will include focusing on regulations that limit a person's ability to register a child care facility, receive a license to operate a child care center, or profitably operate a child care facility while providing quality care. Local Management Boards in each county and jurisdiction in the State of Maryland conduct community needs assessments and address the needs of children and families in their respective jurisdiction and know that accessing affordable quality childcare is a challenge for families all over the state. This bill will address the challenges families and children face finding affordable quality childcare in Maryland.

In September 2024, the Maryland Association of Local Management Boards and the Anne Arundel Early Childhood Childcare Taskforce hosted the first annual statewide and third annual county summit to bring awareness to the needs of the childcare ecosystem. Childcare providers regularly report the overregulation of their industry by MSDE. [One of the recommendations](#) from this summit was to create a commission to examine childcare regulations including licensing and addressing the burdens of the EXCELS Quality Assurance program. We believe a commission will allow the state to identify and solve issues that make childcare unaffordable for parents.

**We urge you to support HB0477 – State Department of Education - Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Regulatory Analysis** for MSDE to participate in a regulatory analysis of childcare facilities.

Sincerely,

Pamela M. Brown, PhD  
Chair

**HB 477 mscca testimony march 27 2025 cp mga pdf.**

Uploaded by: Christina Peusch

Position: FWA



## Maryland State Child Care Association

2810 Carrollton Road  
Annapolis, Md. 21403  
Phone: (410) 820-9196  
Email: [info@mscca.org](mailto:info@mscca.org)  
[www.mscca.org](http://www.mscca.org)

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

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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 5500 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 477: Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers-Adult to Child Ratios-Alterations  
Submitted to: Education, Energy, and Environment Committee**

**March 27, 2025**

MSCCA supports with amendments.

MSCCA's priorities agenda includes addressing critical workforce shortages, improving compensation, and advocating for direct investments for families, children, and child care programs throughout the state. We know the importance of child care to families being able to work, attend school or training programs and we know child care is an economic and equity imperative.

We applaud the sponsors for their efforts and leadership and for shedding light on the issues with licensing and ratios. HB 477 speaks to the need to re-evaluate the regulatory system and national standards related to staff child ratios to improve child care access in Maryland, however MSCCA has concerns about the safety and well-being of children and the provider based on HB 477.

MSCCA asks for amendments that require the Department to work in consultation with standing committees and stakeholders as referenced below.

On page 5, after line 19 insert, **“(5) IN CARRYING OUT THE STUDY, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSULT WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO: (i) THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL; (ii) STATE AND LOCAL EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCILS; (iii) PRIVATE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS; AND (iv) NONPROFITS AND UNIONS WHO REPRESENT CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.”**

MSCCA thanks the sponsors as HB 477 raises concerns around the very real need to address accessibility and affordability for infant/ toddler child care. HB 477 also sheds light on the difficulty of meeting family's needs in a regulatory system that requires a deeper dive to determine the effectiveness and efficiencies to better serve children and families safely, and for child care providers to remain in business. Finally, HB 477 supports ways to address compensation, but we must never prioritize compensation over safety. This legislation requires more examination for safety and best practice for infants to thrive.



Comptroller Lierman's State of the Economy series released on December 31, 2024, clearly shows the need to address the decline in family child care and workforce decline, center-based program and workforce decline impacting all of child care. We must come together with safe, thoughtful, and developmentally appropriate action items to address the decline of child care and the very real need to address the accessibility and affordability of infant and toddler seats to support families and the essential child care providers serving the public good through licensed child care.

Safety is the foundation of child care. The Maryland State fire code states that for Family Child Care homes:

*W. Amend Subparagraphs 16.6.1.7.1 and 17.6.1.7.1 to replace "both" with "all" and Items (1) and (2) with the following Items:*

*(1) The minimum staff-to-client ratio shall be not less than one staff member for up to eight clients, including the caretaker's own children who are incapable of self-preservation.*

*(2) There shall be not more than four clients' incapables of self-preservation, including the caretaker's own children incapable of self-preservation.*

*(3) A staff-to-client ratio of at least one staff member to every two client's incapables of self-preservation shall be always maintained.*

*(4) The staff-to-client ratio shall be permitted to be modified by the authority having legal control where safeguards in addition to those specified in this section are provided.*

Traditionally, local fire codes tend to mirror national codes created by the National Fire Protection Association. Those codes specify no more than a 1:2 ratio for children incapable of self-preservation.

In addition, even if Maryland were to allow this, and a county allowed it, insurance companies would balk at the idea of insuring a home that does not comply with nationally recognized standards for fire safety. Child care providers and businesses are already experiencing increases in insurance costs and limited insurance companies willing to work with child care programs. HB 477 could exacerbate this issue unless amended to a workgroup in consultation with stakeholders and standing committees.

This bill requires amendments to make significant changes safely and meaningfully in the child care regulations. We recommend the Department to be required to consult with stakeholders and standing committees including, the Office of Child Care Advisory Council, a Governor's Council, whose purview is to review all regulations and advise the Department (MSDE) on regulations, and all issues related to child care.

MSCCA urges an unfavorable report with amendments to study the impact of ratio changes and improvements to accessibility for infant and toddler child care in licensed programs.

# **SEIU Local 500 Testimony on HB 477 (Senate Crossov**

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FWA



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  
March 27, 2025  
Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

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.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA  
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs  
SEIU Local 500