



**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 4500 members working in the field of early childhood. We believe children are our most important natural resources and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

March 4, 2020
Position: Oppose
HB 1540

Environment and Transportation Committee Environment-Mold Inspections-Standards, Reporting and Penalties

Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) opposes HB 1540.

The Preamble of this legislation states that there are laws to protect Marylanders from the impact of exposure to the environmental hazards of radon, asbestos, lead-based paint and methane when found in the **home**, but not to protect Marylanders from the harmful effects of exposure to mold. This bill is directly related to indoor air quality.

MSCCA is concerned with the discrimination of the sponsors to choose to only include licensed child care centers and non-public nursery schools and to specifically exclude 6000 plus registered/licensed family child care homes where there are up to 8 children and large family child care with up to 12 children as the majority of children are under the age of 5 years.

We concur that exposure to mold is harmful, especially to developing brains and bodies of infants to age 5 years, but why exclude 45,000 children enrolled in registered family HOMES, which are also businesses? Isn't all children's health important? Should businesses within homes that participate in all aspects of business including, child care subsidies/scholarships, food programs, liability insurance, health and safety training and more be exempt from inspections for mold that could have short term and long term health risks for children in their home business? Shouldn't paying parents expect the same health and safety standards when choosing to entrust their precious child/children to registered family child care as paying parents choosing a child care center? Registered Family Child Care programs are subject to lead-paint inspections, home inspections, fire code inspections and licensing inspections to ensure safety and well-being of children in Maryland. Why would these sponsors negate the importance of children in registered home-based businesses and not pursue mold inspections? Your preamble even specifies home?

MSCCA is confused by the distinction and believes there is an unfair bias to believe child care centers can afford inspections, remediation and penalties, which is far from realistic. Family Child Care providers earn more money than child care teachers with much less overhead expense. Family Child Care on average earn \$40,000 annually, the same as child care directors with degrees, while child care teachers earn \$25,000 annually according to Maryland Family Networks Public Policy manual.

HB 1540 is well intended, but requires a plethora of systems and agencies, both public and private to navigate through a mire of requirements and accountability will not be fully established, therefore less opportunities for necessary resources.

MSCCA also feels the cost, especially if remediation is needed is vastly understated.

We suggest the focus should not be on mandates, but on requiring resources for awareness, education and remediation.

We urge an unfavorable report.