



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 944

Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program - Established

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means and Appropriations
Committees

Date: February 24, 2021

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 944. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact families in Maryland, access to affordable, safe child care opportunities is critically important. HB 944 would provide a fair, reasonable, and welcome framework to expand access to child care grants.

This bill would create the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program under the State Department of Education (the Department) with the purpose of awarding grants to establish and support child care programs. There are 13 child care licensing regions, designated by the Department, providing licensing and oversight for family child care programs across all Maryland counties. This bill would require the Department to partner with the Maryland Child Care Resource Network to award grants to local jurisdictions or the child care licensing regions within urban, suburban, and rural areas across the state.

Maryland county governments all have a common goal of providing for the health and wellbeing of children in their community, and this bill creates a new funding resource to encourage affordable, quality child care across all jurisdictions. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 944 and requests a **FAVORABLE** report.