



Hearing Testimony
Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program, [HB 944](#)
Ways and Means Committee, February 24th
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC

I am writing today to speak on behalf of the Service Employees International Union, Local 500 - the collective bargaining representative of home-based child care providers who participate in the Maryland State Child Care Scholarship program to speak in support of the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program, [HB 944](#). 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, Staff and Faculty at several colleges and universities, staff at non-profits and many other working people.

Licensed family child care (FCC) programs, are usually operated by a woman in her home caring for up to eight children. Many families start these programs as a means to take care of their own children, bring in income and provide support to families in their community. FCC constitutes a critical component of the overall supply of child care and a necessary or preferable option for many parents due to cost, geographic proximity, care provided in family groups of multiple ages and hours of availability. Additionally, children with immune disorders, many premature babies and others with concerns about large groups are ideally suited by family child care homes. In many rural parts of the state, family child care homes represent the only option for child care for many families.

Yet in Maryland and across the United States, we are seeing a drastic decline in Family Child Care. Maryland has seen Family Child Care providers go from approximately 12,500 in 1996 to 5000 in 2020. The pandemic will likely make matters worse. In addition to all of the other great work that legislators are doing to help existing providers survive and thrive, we also must support and encourage new providers to open or we will not meet the needs of Maryland's families. Even now as we talk about re-opening schools, we are hearing from support staff at schools that finding child care for their own children is a big barrier to their return.

There are too many barriers that new providers face in opening and operating a new family child care, through this program legislators can help providers navigate the system and move quickly to open safe programs in targeted areas. These pilot programs would assist providers with getting the training they need to run a safe Family Child Care home. It would also assist providers in navigating a system that can also feel like it was designed for lawyers instead of educators. Additionally, this program can assist localities in bringing together a variety of actors in the community to help create a community of support for family child care providers. As we work to re-open Maryland, all of our business, education and government entities will need to address the child care crisis and this program will give them a platform to make that happen.

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Child care is a vital part of the infrastructure for any community. We know that families, and women in particular, are struggling during COVID. Over the course of the first 10 months of the pandemic, women—particularly women of color—have lost more jobs than men. Overall, women have lost a net of 5.4 million jobs during the recession—nearly 1 million more job losses than men.ⁱ We must repair and rebuild our child care infrastructure to support these women and get them back to work. And we need to create a system that makes is a real prospect for best and brightest educators to become Family Child Care providers. SEIU Local 500 asks that you support HB 944.

ⁱ [Diana Boesch](#) and [Shilpa Phadke](#), [When Women Lose All the Jobs: Essential Actions for a Gender-Equitable Recovery](#)

February 1, 2021, 9:02 am <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2021/02/01/495209/women-lose-jobs-essential-actions-gender-equitable-recovery/>

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