



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Senate Bill 0806 - Childcare Providers and Employee Bonuses
Budget and Taxation – March 9, 2022
SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2022 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges passage of **SB0806 - Childcare Providers and Employee Bonuses**. This bill will establish a fund to award bonuses to employees of child care providers that participate in the Maryland's Child Care Scholarship Program (CSS). The CSS provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible working families in Maryland. This bill requires the Governor's Fiscal Year 2024 budget to include \$16,000,000 for this bonus fund that will be administered by the State Department of Education on a first-come basis, \$10,000,000 of which shall be used to award a \$1,000 retention bonus to each employee who holds or earns a credential through the Maryland Child Care Credential Program during fiscal year 2024. The fund will allocation \$4,000,000 to be used to award a \$500 new hire bonus to each individual who begins employment during fiscal year 2024 as a child care provider or with a child care provider, and to award a \$500 additional bonus to each new hire who also earns a credential through the Maryland Child Care Credential Program, provided the individual commits to remaining employed for at least 6 months. The fund will allocate \$2,000,000 to be used to award a \$500 hiring assistance bonus for each individual hired during fiscal year 2024 by a child care provider that participates in the CSS.

The childcare industry is in crisis. There has been a drop of 36 percent in the childcare workforce since the start of the pandemic. Childcare work is some of the lowest paid work in the country. A national survey found that low wages were the main recruitment challenge for the child care industry. This bill will encourage greater recruitment and retention of trained childcare workers. The availability of affordable, predictable, quality childcare is a significant factor in a woman's ability to remain in the workforce and provide for her family - especially for low-and moderate-income families.

We ask for your support for SB0806 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. To maintain our competitive edge as a State, we need to keep women in our workforce.

Respectfully,

Leslie Milano
President