



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

**SENATE BILL 480 – CHILD CARE STABILIZATION GRANT PROGRAM AND
CHILD CARE EXPANSION GRANT PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED**

Sponsor: Senator Hester, et al

February 16, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 480, which would establish two new grant programs to assist struggling child care providers. The Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and the Child Care Expansion Grant Program would both be administered by the State Department of Education (MSDE).

The Child Care Stabilization Grant Program would provide financial support to licensed child care providers that are in danger of closing due to financial hardship. Awards would range from \$1,000 to \$35,000. The Child Care Expansion Grant Program would provide grant assistance to new or existing child care providers to increase access and availability of licensed child care. Awards would range from \$3,000 to \$50,000. For each grant, MSDE would be responsible for developing eligibility criteria, application procedures, and a formula for determining grant amounts based on the funding provided in the annual budget.

The GBC COVID-19 Business Recovery Advisory Council, comprised of regional business executives, made a number of recommendations to assist businesses recover from the pandemic, with a particular focus on small and minority-owned businesses. Recognizing both the immediate problems, as well as a systemic shortage of quality licensed child-care options, the council called for state and local governments to address the immediate shortage and to create long-term solutions pertaining to child care through targeted policy or funding initiatives.

There is an urgent need to ensure that adequate high-quality child care is available for the children of Maryland's workforce. Strengthening existing child care providers and supporting an increase in the available number of child care is integral to the state's business ecosystem. Without affordable and dependable child care options, Maryland's workforce is challenged to perform their employment responsibilities and duties to maximum capacity and capabilities resulting in loss of production in business operations.

This bill is consistent with one of the key tenets in *Gaining the Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth. The pillar provides:

Government leadership that unites with business as a partner. Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 480.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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