



Senate Bill 806

Child Care Providers and Employees – Bonuses

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committees

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The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 806. This bill would support currently licensed child care providers in the state and would incentivize the establishment of new providers via hiring and retention bonuses. It comes at a time when the child care community and county resources are pushed to their brink.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the shortage of licensed child care providers to support the safe care of Maryland's kids and support the state's working families. The state does not currently have enough licensed providers to meet the needs of families balancing work, child care, and the ongoing pandemic. Many providers had to cease operation during the pandemic out of public health risk and financial instability associated with COVID-19. Those providers that remain in operation are struggling to stay afloat, and many are unable to secure adequate staff to provide reliable child care.

SB 806 seeks to address these issues. The bill would provide existing child care staff with bonuses, as well as provide hiring bonuses for new staff. Particularly helpful is SB 806's appropriation of \$2 million in state funding to provide existing child care providers with funds to offset the hiring bonuses of new hires.

While counties have creatively addressed the needs of reliable and safe child care, they welcome state resources to help stabilize the industry and expand services. Reliable and safe child care is critical for economic development, successful families and communities, and the development of children. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 806 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.