



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Senate Bill 0480
Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child Care Expansion Grant Program - Established
Budget and Taxation Committee – February 16, 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 the passage of SB0480 - Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child Care Expansion Grant Program - Established. This bill will provide financial support to licensed childcare providers that are in danger of closing in the next 12 months due to financial hardship. Annual grants for the Stabilization Grant Program range from \$1,000 to \$35,000, not to exceed five consecutive years. Annual grants for the Expansion Grant Program range from \$3,000 to \$35,000, not to exceed five consecutive years. An applicant may not receive a Stabilization grant and an Expansion grant in the same year. These programs will be administered by the State Department of Education. The bill also requires the Governor to appropriate funds for each grant program, although the amount is not specified.

The availability of affordable, predictable, quality childcare is a significant factor in a woman's ability to remain working and provide for her family. The Maryland Family Network estimates that 79 percent of the State's children under 12 years old have mothers in the workforce. However, the childcare industry is in a crisis. Maryland has some of the highest childcare costs in the U.S., averaging \$13,500 per year for infant care – more than the annual \$10,779 tuition cost for the University of Maryland (which is publicly subsidized). There has been a drop of 36 percent in the childcare workforce since the start of the pandemic and more than one third of childcare providers are considering quitting or closing because of financial challenges.

The enormous expense of establishing and maintaining a childcare facility has long hindered increasing the supply of childcare, especially given the relatively low fees many families can afford to pay. This bill will help address these financial challenges for childcare providers and contribute to the stabilization and expansion of childcare industry, thereby enabling more working women to meet their childcare needs.

We ask for your support for SB0480 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. To maintain our competitive edge as a State, we need to keep women in our workforce. **We also ask you to consider specifying an appropriation amount to ensure that this program is adequately funded.**

Respectfully,

Leslie Milano
President