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## Senate Bill 782 - Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees SUPPORT

February 28, 2022

Esteemed Members of the Senate Finance and Budget and Taxation Committees,

Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), a collective impact initiative of Nonprofit Montgomery, is committed to advancing equitable, accessible systems change in the early care and education (ECE) sector in Montgomery County. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, MMF convened over 50 labor, business, education, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. This representative cross-sector Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition advocates for a diverse, resilient early care and education workforce that is necessary for our state's economic recovery.

**Montgomery Moving Forward and the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition support SB 782, Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition.** We are grateful for Senator Hester's and Rosapepe's recognition of child care providers as critical members of the business sector whose input into the state's economic recovery is essential. Senate Bill 782 establishes a Workgroup on the Post-Covid 19 Economic Transition and requires that a member of this workgroup represent the childcare sector. The Workgroup is tasked with providing recommendations on how the state may adjust its economic development and other strategies in the context of changes resulting from the impact of the pandemic on sectors including child care.

Childcare is a two-generation workforce issue that supports the workforce of today and develops the workforce of tomorrow. A strong child care sector results in a strong workforce; one that can drive innovation and growth forward for Maryland. The pandemic decimated the child care workforce, hitting female Black and Latina business owners the hardest. "Black child care providers earn an average of 78 cents less per hour than their White counterparts," and while the Paycheck Protection Program could have helped ease some of the burden they faced during the pandemic, "white [child care] business owners were approved for Paycheck Protection Program funds at almost twice the rate of Latino business owners."<sup>1</sup> The recovery of the child care sector is critical to the recovery of the overall economy. However, "pandemic-fueled staffing challenges threaten to hold back the recovery, as the staffing problems at day cares have a ripple effect across the economy."<sup>2</sup>

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<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/press-release/black-latina-child-care-providers-face-heaviest-burden-struggling-industry-new-report>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/09/19/childcare-workers-quit/>

SB 782 prioritizes child care as a key business sector to inform Maryland's recovery. Montgomery Moving Forward and the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition support Senate Bill 782 and the recognition of child care as a critical economic driver for our state's recovery; one that is largely led by women of color. The inclusion of a child care representative in the Workgroup on the Post-COVID-19 Crisis Economic Transition will not only inform the state's economic future but also its commitment to equity and inclusion. **We urge you to give SB 782 a favorable report.**

Respectfully and sincerely,

**Montgomery Moving Forward Co-Chairs, Kevin Beverly; Susan Madden; and Kathy Stevens, and the following Members of the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition: Larry Bram, Senior Vice President, Innovation & Program Development. Easter Seals Serving DC|MD|VA; Jody Burghardt, Division Director, Children and Family Services, Sheppard Pratt; Ruby Daniels, President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association; Christina Lopez, President, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC)**