



Maryland State Family Child Care Association

HB 995 Early Childhood Development -
Child Care Scholarship Program - Alterations

Submitted to House Ways and Means

March 4, 2022

Position: SUPPORT

Good Afternoon, my name is Rebecca Hancock and I am the Vice-President of Public Policy for the Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA). We represent approximately 4,440 family providers and 145 providers of large family child care homes in the state of Maryland. I would like to thank Delegate Atterbeary and this Committee for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 995.

Ideally the Scholarship Program is in place to help working families have access to and help pay for quality child care for their children; currently it is less than successful. The application process is arduous and confusing at best. Parents have had services denied for a single piece of missing information. The bi-lingual community, both providers and parents struggle due to the huge language barrier making it difficult to have their questions answered. Providers are also put in the position of not knowing when or if they will receive payment for their services.

We believe that HB 995 will enable more parents to take advantage of the Scholarship Program by offering presumptive eligibility; meaning a parent who is already receiving government assistance can automatically enroll in the program while the "Department" verifies their eligibility to remain in the program. In addition, removing the child support requirement will enable more parents to participate in the program, especially parents involved in Domestic Violence Situations. I personally had a parent who



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had difficulty with the child support requirement. When the Restraining Order expired, the Scholarship Program would not renew the mother's voucher unless she supplied the father's name. The mother tried to explain "just because the Order had expired didn't mean the abusive parent was any less dangerous". The parent and I both contacted the scholarship program on numerous occasions but couldn't get the voucher renewed. Consequently, the parent pulled her child from my program and said they would have to see who she could "find" to care for her daughter. Providers have shared with us their horror stories of waiting months, to be paid or not getting paid at all. HB 995 alleviates this by requiring the "Department" to pay providers within 10 days of receiving the invoice. Requiring the Department to streamline the application process would also benefit working families in Maryland; many times the process takes too long and parents have lost employment opportunities due to the delay in approval.

We are very appreciative of the positive changes outlined in HB 995; unfortunately, language barriers in the application process are a very real issue and were not addressed in this legislation. MSFCCA supports HB 995 and respectfully asks for a favorable vote. We believe it will benefit many working families in Maryland, as well as child care providers.

Testimony presented by :

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