



Testimony in Support of House Bill 995

Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations

To: Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and Members of the Ways & Means Committee

From: Demaune A. Millard, President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore

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Family League of Baltimore (Family League) supports House Bill 995 as it would require the State Department of Education to establish a certain process for granting presumptive eligibility for a subsidy under the Child Care Scholarship Program; require the Department to award a certain subsidy to an individual who submits certain proof; prohibit the Department from requiring an individual to take certain actions to be eligible for a certain subsidy; require the Department to pay a certain child care provider within 10 days of receipt of an invoice from a child care provider.

This bill is necessary for families across Maryland, specifically the city of Baltimore as childcare enrollment can be a hassle because of the cost. Most children come from working families and not being able to afford to send their kids to childcare because they cannot afford it can be a hindrance. While there are families that have access to the scholarship, some are reluctant to apply because of the barriers that are in place. For instance, some children are in two parent households and the current law requires the applying parent to apply for child support, this takes that requirement away. This dynamic can be an issue because sometimes two parent households can still equate to low-income and financial struggles. Another issue with current requirements for families is the lengthy application and vocabulary used for applying, so allowing families to receive Temporary Cash Assistance and Social Security Income to automatically be eligible could lift a burden.

While families have been impacted by the current child care scholarship laws, providers have been as well. Providers are reluctant to accept scholarship children because of the length of time they have to wait to receive payment. This causes them to either turn children away or hold spot for an unknown length of time until the payment is received. HB995 would require the department to issue payment within 10 days of receiving the invoice from the childcare provider causing financial relief, especially to smaller, family operated ones. With the passage of this bill providers can accept more children and families can send their children to daycare while they continue to work.

As the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, Family League works collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions to align resources to dismantle systemic barriers that limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities.

Our policy focus is also guided by and in support of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention Youth and Victim Services' Results for Child Well-Being. Through our strategic planning process, we have prioritized three of these results areas, focusing on the success of Baltimore's children in school; the economic stability of families; and the safety of communities for children, youth, and families. We support HB995 in particular because of its alignment with the result areas that work to ensure *Children Are Successful in School* and *Families Are Economically Stable*.

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