



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

**HOUSE BILL 995– EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT –
CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM- ALTERATIONS**

Sponsor: Delegate Solomon

March 4, 2022

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports House Bill 995, which would specify eligibility requirements for the Child Care Scholarship Program, administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), as well as to ensure that an applicant can receive the scholarship while waiting for eligibility determination. The bill also provides that individuals will not be required to pay a copay for child care if they are receiving other various public assistance benefits, including Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, Temporary Cash Assistance, and a Guaranteed Access Grant for higher education.

The GBC COVID-19 Business Recovery Advisory Council, comprised of regional business executives, made a number of recommendations to assist businesses recover from the pandemic, with a particular focus on small and minority-owned businesses. Recognizing both the immediate problems, as well as a systemic shortage of quality licensed child-care options, the council called for state and local governments to address the immediate shortage and to create long-term solutions pertaining to child care through targeted policy or funding initiatives.

Without affordable and dependable child care options, Maryland’s workforce is challenged to perform their employment responsibilities and duties to maximum capacity and capabilities resulting in loss of production in business operations. The provisions in House Bill 995 would provide guidance to ensure that those who are in most need of child care scholarships can immediately receive assistance, and limits co-pays for those least able to pay them. In turn, businesses will benefit from having employees with reliable child care, thereby stabilizing the company’s workforce.

House Bill 995 is consistent with one of the key tenets in *Gaining a Competitive Edge: Keys to Economic Growth and Job Creation in Maryland*, a report published by the GBC that identifies eight core pillars for a competitive business environment and job growth. The pillar provides:

Government leadership that unites with business as a partner. Maryland leaders must set a welcoming tone that communicates positive support for business, respect for the private sector as a partner, not an adversary, and reflects a strategic plan for business growth and job creation.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 995.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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