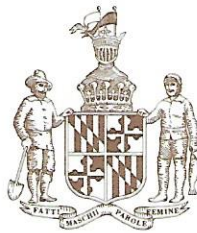


NANCY J. KING
Legislative District 39
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair
Education, Business and
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Bill 350 – Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program - Funding

February 15, 2023

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

As little as five years ago, Maryland’s Child Care Scholarship Program (CCS) ranked at or very near the bottom of the 50 states in access and affordability. Federal law requires “equal access” to childcare for low-income families, and the Feds strongly urge states to set rates that give access to 75% of childcare programs. Maryland’s rates at the time gave parents access to only 10% of childcare programs and the income cap for a family of four was \$35,000.

Now, five years later, thanks to actions by the Legislature, the Administration and the Maryland State Department of Education, the CCS rates have risen from the 10th to the 70th percentile and the income cap for a family of four has risen to \$90,000. These improvements have moved Maryland from one of the worst programs in the country to one of the best.

Raising rates and income caps, and lowering or removing copayments has resulted in:

- increasing parents’ ability to find and pay for care;
- encouraging more childcare programs to accept scholarship children;
- helping providers in low-income communities - who are most reliant on the scholarship - sustain their programs and improve quality;
- getting more children in safe, quality child care;
- and, enabling more parents to return to the workforce.

Senate Bill 350 will codify these gains in the State’s Child Care Scholarship Program (CCS), and guarantee access to all families eligible for CCS. Codifying these gains will ensure that the advances we have made in supporting our families will continue. Securing assistance for quality childcare is critical for families who are trying to get into or remain in the workforce and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 350.