



March 13, 2023

Subject: **Support for SB881; Child Care Providers and Employees - Bonuses - Alterations**

Dear Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

On behalf of Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) and the entire Nonprofit Montgomery organization, we write in strong support of SB 881; Child Care Providers and Employees- Bonuses-Alterations.

Dedicated and equitable support of the child care sector and our early care and education workforce are critical to our state's, and country's, economic recovery and social-emotional resilience post-pandemic. SB881 will provide essential support for the early care and education (ECE) workforce which continues to suffer from paralyzing shortages and declining numbers of people who see child care as a sustainable professional pathway. This is due, not least because of low wages, weak public investment, and generational undervaluing of the work that is largely provided by women, many women of color, across our state and country as a whole.

The child care provider community is still waiting for the implementation of HB1100/SB 806- Child Care Providers and Employees – Bonuses- that was passed during the 2022 General Assembly Session. Many of us, and many of you, were involved in the passage of this bill last year. We need your commitment now to move SB881 to fruition so that providers who have endured the pandemic and continue to provide essential, culturally appropriate social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic foundational skills to our youngest learners can see tangible public value for what they do. Your support for SB881 is also important in motivating new, talented, and dedicated educators to join the ECE workforce at a time when they are desperately needed. SB881 will go a long way, too, with incentivizing talented early childhood educators to join the profession; helping current providers to motivate recruitment of qualified staff; and retaining staff who work diligently to educate our children and nurture their learning and success at the most critical time in their development.

We are grateful for the leadership and diligent work of this committee on the issue of early care and education (ECE). Your recognition of ECE as the cornerstone of our economy and essential to nurturing a capable workforce of tomorrow while investing in the workforce of today is commendable.

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Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) is a collective impact initiative of [Nonprofit Montgomery](#). We work with partners across sectors to effect systems-wide change on issues affecting all county residents. MMF convenes the [Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition](#). The Coalition is a regional public-private coalition of 50+ early care and education leaders and advocates from the business, education, public, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors that work collaboratively with state elected partners to reduce barriers to quality child care and education and create equitable processes, practices, and pathways for children, their caregivers, and the child care workforce across the state of Maryland.

We are eager to continue to work in partnership with your committee to ensure the full recovery, resilience, and sustainability of the early care and education sector across our state. We urge your full support of SB881 and the needed boost it will provide to child care providers around our state.

Sincerely,

Lavontte Chatmon
Executive Director, Nonprofit Montgomery