



THE SHRIVER CENTER

1000 Hilltop Circle
Baltimore, MD 21250
phone: 410.455.2493
fax: 410.455.1074
www.choiceprograms.org

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Senate Bill 500: Education - Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund - Alterations

February 14, 2024

Position: Favorable

The Shriver Center at UMBC addresses critical social challenges by bridging campus and community through engaged scholarship and applied learning. Through the work of The Shriver Center, UMBC has become a national leader in applied learning, community engagement, and community-based service delivery. It is the institutional home of six distinct programs: Shriver Peaceworker Fellowship, Service Learning and Community Engagement (SLCE), The Choice Program at UMBC, Community Leadership, Maryland Public Service Scholars (MPSS), and Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP). Together, through learning opportunities, training, and direct services, Shriver staff support the educational development of Marylanders from cradle to graduate school. The Shriver Center's MECLP is a workforce initiative designed to accelerate cross-sector leadership in early childhood. MECLP's vision is to develop and support strong leaders who are catalyzing positive change and will significantly improve school readiness and related outcomes for early learners, particularly children and their families who have been disadvantaged and live in under-resourced communities.. MECLP is positioning Maryland at the vanguard in developing transformative early childhood leaders.

Senate Bill 500 promises to introduce the best practices of Portland, Oregon to Maryland with an innovative approach. This was a project that emerged out of a MECLP fellow's research. Shriver supports SB500 because it prioritizes scholarship funding for students attending colleges or universities that offer first language or bilingual course work in early childhood education (or a related field). Shriver supports efforts to ensure that all providers have equitable opportunities to pursue higher education and advance professionally especially as professional requirements for childcare providers increase. Access to education in one's first language helps college students be more successful in their degree programs.

Further, childcare providers with additional education and training may increase their knowledge and skills in caring for children, which benefits the children and families they serve as well. A better prepared workforce of early childhood professionals will better prepare young children ages 0-5 for elementary and middle school education. Ultimately, this will improve life outcomes for generations of Marylanders.

For these reasons, Shriver supports a favorable report on SB500.