

Hearing Testimony February 12, 2025
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500

SB610
Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program – Funding

SUPPORT

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, Faculty and Staff at several Maryland colleges and universities, staff at non-profits and many other working people across the region. We urge a FAVORABLE Report on SB610 – **Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program – Funding**. We would also like to thank Senator King for her many years as an advocate for the child care community.

SB610 recognizes the vital role of family child care programs in both the workforce and local communities and provides essential funding to the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program so that it can continue to support family child care providers throughout the state and ultimately benefit the families and children they serve.

The child care sector continues to face challenges, exacerbated by the pandemic's impact. According to MSDE, over 800 child care programs/providers have been lost, and the escalating costs of child care, coupled with inflation, have contributed to a decline in female employment, as noted in a recent report from the Comptroller's office, with about 160,000 women exiting the workforce due primarily to child care and transportation obstacles. The top reason why so many Marylanders did not return to work after the pandemic when their businesses or employers reopened was they could not find affordable, reliable, quality child care. Maryland needs to take proactive steps, or the child care work force will continue to decline and parents will be left with even fewer options for child care.

Child care businesses are facing critical workforce shortage supply. Our state needs to encourage more diverse and equitable candidates to join the child care profession, and we believe that the funding provided for in SB610 will help address these issues by helping to build a qualified and diverse child care workforce. We urge a favorable report.