

Maryland State Child Care Association

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Caring For Maryland's Most Important Natural Resource™

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 5500 members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

Testimony: SB 610: Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program-Funding Submitted to: Budget and Taxation Committee Feb 12, 2025

MSCCA fully supports SB 610.

Family child care programs are essential to the workforce and communities. This important legislation recognizes the success of the Growing Family Child Care pilot program in Maryland.

The successful Growing Family Child Care program, now permanently in law, needs funding to address the decline of child care providers and to support overall capacity building to increase seats, especially for our infants and toddlers. SB 610 provides the necessary funding to continue to support family child care providers throughout the state and ultimately benefit families and children they serve. Family Child Care is an important option for child care.

SB 610 is critical in supporting working families in developmentally appropriate settings and provides funding for the program to build capacity in desperately declining businesses. Many areas of the state have child care deserts where child care, especially family child care is acutely needed.

The child care industry has not fully recovered from the pandemic and was tenuous prior to the pandemic. According to the recent Comptroller's State of the Economy report released on December 31, 2024, child care has lost over 1,200 providers and more than 12,000 child care seats post COVID. Family-based providers have historically provided care for more infants (0-18 months), and the decline in family-based providers (which are more affordable, more likely to offer varied hours, and more likely to be located in residential neighborhoods) means fewer options for workers who have non-traditional schedules, limited transportation access, or do not qualify for the scholarship program. A <https://marylandtaxes.gov/reports/static-files/research/childcare.pdf>

The cost of child care is increasing to keep up with costs of inflation and as it does, female unemployment decreases by 5%. Already, 160,000 women have left the workforce due to primarily child care and transportation issues. For decades, we have undervalued and underinvested in our child care system, and now our economy—and our most vulnerable workers—are paying the price.

It will take the combined efforts of the federal government, state leaders, and businesses to ensure every family has access to affordable, quality childcare that can move the country and its economy forward.

SB 610 makes an impact by building capacity, which leads to more access to child care for families. Child care is an important economic and equity imperative and child care providers are the backbone of society. SB 610 supports the growth of family child care in our neighborhoods and communities as they are the fabric of family support, while also driving the economy.

MSCCA urges a favorable report.