

Hearing Testimony March 5, 2025
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500

SB852

Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood
Pilot Program - Establishment

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 SB852 – Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program - Establishment.

SEIU Local 500 believes children are our most important natural resource, and the state must work to meet the needs of all Maryland's children from birth to five and beyond. SB852 aligns with these priorities and will address numerous obstacles and inequities by expanding the definition of a Tier 1 child to include all children who are 3 or 4, are enrolled in full-day prekindergarten, and have a disability or are from a home in which English is not the primary language spoken. This bill builds upon legislation that passed in 2023 that added homeless youth to the definition of Tier 1 child.

SEIU Local 500's priorities include ensuring families have access to affordable, consistent, quality child care and prekindergarten options and to alleviate barriers for families. We believe that SB852 would go a long way in ensuring that our most vulnerable children and their families are supported when enrolled in full-day prekindergarten.

Therefore, we request a favorable report on Senate Bill 852, as it represents an investment in the futures of Maryland's most vulnerable youth.