



Testimony of Celebree Schools in Support of SB0452

To: Members of the Maryland State Legislature

From: Celebree Schools, Maryland's Largest Child Care Provider

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB0452 – Establishment of the Child Care Affordability Commission

Honorable Members of the Maryland State Legislature,

My name is Kristen Miller, and I represent Celebree Schools, Maryland's largest provider of early childhood education and care. Celebree Schools operates 24 schools across the state, and we are committed to providing high-quality early education and child care to children and families across Maryland. I am writing today to express our support for SB0452, which establishes the Child Care Affordability Commission to study and make recommendations regarding child care affordability in the state.

As Maryland's largest child care provider, Celebree Schools has witnessed firsthand the significant financial barriers that families face in accessing affordable, quality child care. The establishment of the Child Care Affordability Commission is an important and necessary step toward addressing these challenges and ensuring that all Maryland families have access to the care and education they need to thrive.

Child care affordability has become one of the most pressing issues facing Maryland families today. For many working parents, the high cost of child care often means making difficult choices between providing quality care for their children and meeting other financial needs. At Celebree Schools, we believe that every child deserves access to quality early education, regardless of their family's income. However, the current cost of child care often places a significant strain on families, particularly those with multiple children or those in lower- and middle-income brackets. SB0452 is a critical piece of legislation because it seeks to examine the factors that drive up child care costs and find viable solutions to reduce financial barriers for families. By establishing the Child Care Affordability Commission, the state is taking an important step toward ensuring that affordable child care options are available to all Maryland families, which is vital for the well-being of both children and their parents.



As the largest child care provider in Maryland, Celebree Schools is dedicated to maintaining high standards in early childhood education. We understand that affordable care must also be high-quality care, as the first five years of a child's life are critical for cognitive, emotional, and social development. This is why we fully support SB0452's efforts to explore how to make quality child care more affordable, without compromising the standards that are necessary for children's long-term success.

The commission's work to study and recommend policies that support high-quality child care programs will benefit not only families but also providers across the state. It is essential that the recommendations resulting from this study help child care providers maintain high educational standards while ensuring financial sustainability. This will create an environment in which both children and educators can thrive.

The affordability of child care is closely tied to the economic stability of the child care workforce. At Celebree Schools, we are deeply committed to supporting our educators and staff, recognizing that they play a pivotal role in the development of young learners. However, the current cost structure of child care in Maryland makes it challenging to offer competitive wages to the professionals who work tirelessly to provide care and education to children.

The Child Care Affordability Commission, through its study, should also examine the need for policies that support workforce development in the child care sector. We urge the commission to prioritize recommendations that address compensation and professional development opportunities for child care workers, ensuring that the individuals who care for and teach our children are fairly compensated for their invaluable work.

We urge the members of the Maryland State Legislature to pass SB0452 and commit to ensuring that child care is both accessible and affordable for all families in the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miller

Director of Education

Celebree Schools
