

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

SB868

Substitute Child Care Provider Pool Pilot Program - Established

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 SB868 – **Substitute Child Care Provider Pool Pilot Program - Established**. We would also like to thank the sponsors for their support of the early childhood community.

Senate Bill 868 seeks to establish regional substitute teacher pools for child care facilities in Maryland and provides funding beginning in 2027 through 2030. This bill is a significant step forward in addressing one of the most pressing challenges that child care providers face—ensuring a reliable, qualified workforce to meet the needs of young children, even in the event of staff absences.

Child care facilities play an essential role in the early development of children, and maintaining consistent, high-quality care is critical for their growth and well-being. Unfortunately, staffing shortages and the difficulty in finding qualified substitute teachers are longstanding issues that many providers struggle with. By creating regional substitute teacher pools, this bill will help child care centers, family child care homes, and large family child care homes have access to a pool of qualified, vetted substitutes who can step in when needed. This will ensure that child care providers can maintain stability and continuity of care for children, even when regular staff are absent.

Additionally, this initiative will benefit child care providers by reducing the stress and logistical challenges of recruiting substitutes on short notice. It will also help alleviate the administrative burden, allowing child care providers to focus more on providing quality care rather than spending time searching for replacement staff. For families, this bill offers peace of mind knowing that their children will be cared for by qualified professionals, even in the event of an absence.

The establishment of a substitute teacher pool will also help to improve the retention of child care staff by providing greater flexibility in staffing, reducing burnout, and ensuring that staff are supported. This

pool could offer a more consistent and reliable workforce for child care facilities, ultimately benefiting both providers and families.

In conclusion, we fully support this bill as it will strengthen the child care sector in Maryland, support providers, and ensure that children continue to receive the high-quality care they deserve. I strongly encourage its passage.

Therefore, we request a favorable report on SB868.