



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 785

Common Ownership Communities and Zoning Authorities - Operation of Family Child Care Homes - Limitations

House Environment & Transportation Committee

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic health and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

HB 785 prohibits a provision in certain documents of a cooperative housing corporation or homeowners association, and does not allow a local jurisdiction from prohibiting or restricting the establishment or operation of family child care homes or limiting the number of children for which family child care homes provides family child care to below the number authorized by the State Department of Education.

The Chamber believes that HB 785 is a necessary step to increase access to childcare facilities that promote the wellbeing and effectiveness of Maryland's workforce and their employers. Over half of Maryland counties are deemed "childcare deserts".¹ In 2023, Ready Nation projected a \$2.2 billion annual impact in Maryland solely from infant and toddler care shortages.² This staggering figure doesn't account for the impact of the lack of affordable, accessible care for older children on our workforce and tax base.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce and its members are tremendously supportive of measures that aim to increase the availability and affordability of childcare in Maryland. The childcare crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, is having an exceedingly negative impact on workers' ability to participate in the labor market. The lack of availability and affordability in childcare is a major factor keeping Marylanders out of the workforce, which shrinks an already scarce labor pool and further contributes to the structural inflation that our business and consumers are currently facing.

¹ <https://childcaredeserts.org/2018/index.html?state=MD>

² <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/2124-strengthening-investments-in-child-care-can-bolster-maryland-s-future>

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **favorable report** on HB 785.

