



House Bill 785

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

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Date: February 18, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 785 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill places certain restrictions on cooperative housing corporations and local jurisdictions in relation to regulating the number of children allowed in a family child care and large family child care homes.

The need for additional childcare capacity is something recognized not only by counties, but also largely by the workforce they employ. The recent 2023 report from the Commission to Advance and Strengthen Firefighting and EMS in Maryland highlighted childcare as one of the top three barriers to recruitment and retention of career and volunteer firefighters. Without adequate, affordable, and safe childcare infrastructure, the quality of life for our mutual constituents will suffer.

At the end of this testimony, counties offer a procedural amendment to restrain county authority but retain the ability to reflect infrastructure limitations where they pose a major concern.

The central concern for counties is that childcare homes may be in areas where there may not be sufficient infrastructure to support them. Creating a high standard for such a finding, as suggested, would allow the jurisdiction to balance these competing goals effectively.

Counties support the goal of HB 785 and share in the urgency of advancing child care options. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 785 a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**.

MACo Proposed Amendments to HB 785:

On page 6, in line 21, after “(B)” insert “OTHER THAN AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION,”;

After line 24 insert:

“(C) A LOCAL JURISDICTION MAY, ONLY UPON A SPECIFIC FINDING THAT EXPANSION OF CHILD CARE CAPACITY TO THE NUMBER AUTHORIZED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WOULD CREATE AN UNDUE EFFECT ON SAFETY OR HEALTH OF THE IMMEDIATE AND SURROUNDING AREA, RETAIN OR ESTABLISH A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN FOR WHICH A FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME OR LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME MAY PROVIDE.”