



## **Testimony on behalf of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce**

*In Support*

*House Bill 862—Child Care Affordability Commission--Establishment*

*February 25, 2025*

*House Ways and Means Committee*

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) was founded in 1926. Since then, the organization has grown to more than 600 businesses located throughout the Greater Bethesda area and beyond. On behalf of these members, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on House Bill 862—Child Care Affordability Commission--Establishment.

The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce has identified the issue of child care access and affordability as an urgent economic imperative that needs to be addressed to help Maryland grow and prosper. We strongly believe there are economic costs to unreliable and unaffordable child care. As Maryland focuses on growing its workforce, child care challenges present a growing threat to the State's economy. The rapid workplace changes brought about by the recent pandemic has had a tremendous, lasting impact and created significant challenges in the attraction and retention of employees. Now more than ever, the availability of quality, affordable child care is an important determinant to the success of the local workforce.

We believe House Bill 862 would provide a long-term roadmap to achieving child care affordability in the State. We appreciate the inclusion of businesses of all sizes on this Commission as the business community is absolutely a stakeholder in this issue. When child care is affordable for all families who need and want it, we believe the economy can thrive.

For these reasons, we strongly support House Bill 862 and urge a favorable report. Thank you to Delegate Solomon for his leadership on this issue.

