



February 25, 2025

**HB 862
Child Care Affordability Commission – Establishment**

House Ways and Means Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 862. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government. Additionally, we offer this testimony on behalf of the families of more than 50,000 students served by over 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

House Bill 862 would establish a Maryland "Child Care Affordability Commission" to study and make recommendations on increasing affordability and access to child care for Maryland parents. The legislation calls for the commission to consider all aspects and components of child care in Maryland, including barriers to affordability and availability, as well as potential revenue streams to increase both of those components within our state.

Child Care is an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has supported proposals seeking to "expand assistance to parents with children and improve family formation and stability." (*Letter to Congress on Child Tax Credit*, USCCB, 2016). This bill would indubitably lead to legislative recommendations for creative ways to expand access to child care.

Additionally, the Church supports this bill as a part of its priority interest in alleviating poverty in our state, as enabling working parents' continued access to child care services is an imperative part of combating poverty. Often, a barrier to sustainable and full-time employment is the availability and affordability of reliable child care services. The State should thus do all it can to support access to child care services for working parents.

The Conference appreciates your consideration, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 862.