



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for **FAVORABLE Report With Amendments** – HB 862 – Child Care
Affordability Commission – Establishment

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and Distinguished Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

House Bill 862, “Child Care Affordability Commission – Establishment” is a critical bill that has the potential to influence future recruitment and retention of uniformed service members, now and well into the future. This Commission seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Obstacles to obtaining a fiscally sustainable system of child care and early childhood education that meets the needs of children living in poverty and children at risk of living in poverty;
2. Barriers to increasing the supply of child care while offering additional supports and incentives to achieve and maintain quality;
3. Measures to ensure the success and sustainability of the Child Care Scholarship Program for working families and any additional measures to support working families, including business tax credits and other incentives for investments in child care;
4. Revenue streams to create an adequate and sustainable source of funding for child care in the State.
5. What should be the economic threshold the State should use to cap the cost of child care for families in the State; and
6. What are any other relevant issues concerning access to or the quality or affordability of child care, as determined by the Commission.

We know that availability of child care in the community is extremely limited, and the costs to Marylanders are exorbitant. Here are some examples:

- The [National Database of Childcare Prices](#), part of the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Labor, offers the most comprehensive look yet at how child care costs vary across 2,360 counties in 47 states.

Favorable with Amendments – HB 862 – Child Care Affordability Commission – Establishment

- In a report released in 2022, the average cost for parents with young children in Montgomery County, where I live, was **15.6% of their total income**. The report **calls these prices as “untenable for families”**.
- Child care prices were consistently higher for infant care, with the median price for **one** child in center-based infant care ranging from **\$10,848*** in small counties to **\$21,533*** in very large counties.
- Among home-based providers, infant care ranged from **\$8,616*** in small counties to **\$16,587*** in very large counties.
- Among preschool-aged children, center-based prices **per child** ranged from **\$8,712*** in small counties to **\$17,457*** in very large counties.
- Home-based child care prices ranged from **\$7,309*** in small counties to **\$15,634*** in very large counties.
- The burden is even **higher for families with multiple children in before- and after-school care or center-based child care**. The analysis showed **29 percent of families with children under 6 have two or more in that age-group**.
- **High child care costs are keeping some families — especially women — out of the labor market**, the Women’s Bureau report noted.
- The analysis found that even a 10 percent increase in child care costs causes a 1 percentage point decrease in moms in the workforce. A 50% increase dropped the number of employed mothers by 2 percentage points, and in counties where child care costs more than doubled, maternal employment dropped 4 percentage points

***2024 inflation-adjusted prices**

Twenty-two percent of active-duty spouses are unemployed¹, five to six times the rate of their counterparts². Obtaining reliable and affordable child care is a primary barrier to military spouse employment³. Increasing the availability of lower cost care options in the community, especially for service member families is important, especially regarding recruitment and retention.

This bill specifies a number of required Commission members. However, it makes no mention of a military-focused child care proponent. The Maryland military entity **best able to provide up-to-date and accurate data about military child care** is the Maryland Military Installation Council (the Council). Therefore, we ask that the **bill be amended** to include the **Council as a required member**.

Costs associated with this bill should be limited. A fiscal note is not yet available, however, as child care availability has the potential to greatly impact the Maryland economy, costs should not be a deciding factor, even in this deficit budget cycle.

¹ [2022 Military Family Lifestyle Survey](#). Blue Star Families (2023).

² Women 16 and over. Labor Force Statistics from the [Current Population Survey](#), Dec 2024.

³ [2022 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report: Child Care Spotlight](#) Blue Star Families (2023)

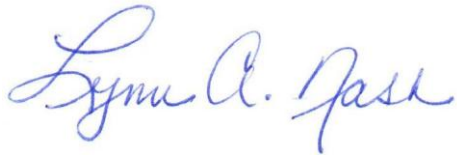
Favorable with Amendments – HB 862 – Child Care Affordability Commission – Establishment

The Maryland Military Coalition requests a Favorable with Amendments report on HB 862. We look forward to better childcare availability in the future.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

The Coalition wishes to thank Senator King for her continued support of the Uniformed Services Community.

Respectfully,



Lynn A. Nash, PhD, RN, PHCNS-BC, FAAN
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director
District 31

1 Attachment – Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars