

**House Bill 862**  
**Child Care Affordability Commission – Establishment**  
Ways and Means Committee  
February 25, 2025  
**Support**

**Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports House Bill 862**, which would establish the Child Care Affordability Commission to study and make recommendations regarding childcare affordability in the State of Maryland.

The urgency of this legislation is highlighted in the Maryland Comptroller's December 2024 State of the Economy report on Childcare and the Economy. The report reveals that Maryland families are spending between 8% and 27% of their income on childcare for a 4-year-old, while it should only cost about 7% according to federal guidelines.<sup>1</sup> Childcare costs have worsened significantly, rising on average by 20% from 2020 to 2023.<sup>1</sup> These high costs are forcing many parents, particularly mothers, to quit their jobs because their entire paycheck would go toward childcare.<sup>1</sup> As a result, Maryland has experienced the largest drop in workforce participation of any state since February 2020.<sup>1</sup>

For a century, Catholic Charities has provided care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. We accompany Marylanders as they age with dignity, support their pursuit of employment and career advancement, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve independence, prepare for educational success, and welcome immigrant neighbors into Maryland communities.

**As Maryland's largest private provider of human services, we witness firsthand the challenges families face in securing affordable childcare.** Supporting families and children is one of the core pillars that drives our organization's mission. Through our Head Start programs alone, we serve over 800 children and 700 families in Baltimore and surrounding areas, giving us unique insight into the struggles and aspirations of working parents. For many of the families we serve, the high cost of childcare represents a financial burden that directly undermines their ability to achieve independence.

Catholic Charities' commitment to working families is reflected in our agenda for this legislative session, with childcare as one of our core priorities. The Commission's comprehensive mandate to study barriers to increasing childcare supply, examine measures to ensure the success of the Child Care Scholarship Program, and determine appropriate cost thresholds for families align with our goal of supporting working families. We particularly appreciate the Commission's inclusive membership structure, which ensures voices from various stakeholders – including parents, providers, employers, and policy experts – will be heard in this important conversation.

**For these reasons, Catholic Charities of Baltimore urges the committee to issue a favorable report for House Bill 862.**

Submitted By: Madelin Martinez, Assistant Director of Advocacy

1. Comptroller of Maryland. *STATE of the ECONOMY SERIES: CHILD CARE and the ECONOMY DECEMBER 2024 COMPTROLLER of MARYLAND.*; 2024. Accessed February 19, 2025. <https://www.marylandtaxes.gov/reports/static-files/research/childcare.pdf>