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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 26, 2025

To: Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our unanimous support for **HB477: Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Adult to Child Ratios - Alterations**. This important legislation seeks to address the growing demand for accessible and quality child care by increasing the number of infants under the age of two that may be cared for in family child care homes and adjusting adult-to-child ratios in child care centers.

Access to affordable, high-quality child care is a cornerstone of economic stability for Maryland's women and families. Many working mothers, particularly those in underserved communities, struggle to secure reliable child care due to limited availability and high costs. HB477 offers a practical solution by allowing child care providers to care for additional infants and adjusting ratios in a way that expands access while maintaining safety and quality.

The shortage of child care options in Maryland disproportionately impacts women, who often serve as the primary caregivers in their households. When child care facilities operate under strict capacity limitations, mothers are frequently left with few options, forcing them to reduce work hours, leave their jobs, or settle for less-than-ideal care arrangements. By increasing the number of infants that family child care homes can serve and adjusting center ratios, HB477 helps alleviate this crisis, ensuring that more working mothers have access to the child care they need to remain in the workforce.

Moreover, this bill supports child care providers—many of whom are women-owned small business operators—by allowing them to serve more families without compromising care standards. Strengthening Maryland's child care infrastructure benefits not only working families but also the broader economy, as it enables more women to fully participate in the workforce, contributing to business productivity and financial security for households.

HB477 is a necessary step toward creating a more equitable child care system that supports both families and providers. The Maryland Women's Caucus urges the Ways and Means Committee to issue a favorable report on this bill. By expanding access to quality child care, we can foster economic opportunity, promote gender equity, and support the well-being of Maryland's children and working families.

Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to improving the lives of Marylanders.