

## City of Baltimore

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## Councilwoman Phylcia R. L. Porter,

### District 10

CHAIR: Public Health and Environment

MEMBER:

Labor and Workforce

Public Safety

Transportation and Land Use

March 6, 2026

Bill Title: HB0910: Child Care Scholarship Program - Priority for Child Care Providers

Position: Favorable

To: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, Appropriations Committee

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support for HB0910, a practical and equity-centered bill aimed to strengthen Maryland's early childhood care system by requiring the State Department of Education to prioritize eligible childcare professionals for the childcare scholarship program through a formalized framework.

At its core, HB0910 recognizes the inextricable link between the stability of Maryland's economy and the healthy development of children growing up in our state. Studies found that among families living below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold, 48% had to take unpaid leave when child care was unavailable or unaffordable and 51% either reduced their work hours or were forced to care for one or more children while working. These realities demonstrate how gaps in child care access directly undermine both family stability and workforce participation.

To be clear, childcare is a necessity, and these challenges persist here in south Baltimore, as well. United Way of Central Maryland's 2025 ALICE report shows that more than 62% of households in ZIP code 21225, either live below the federal poverty level or are classified as ALICE. This means that a clear majority of our families are facing financial hardship, highlighting the urgent need for policies that strategically strengthen economic stability and expand access to essential supports for working families.

HB0910 will help stabilize and support the early childhood workforce, reduce barriers to affordable childcare for working families and benefit the state's overall economy. I am thankful to Comptroller Lierman for her leadership in identifying childcare as a critical factor impacting Labor Participation Rates in Maryland and to the bill sponsors for your collaborative work to address this complex issue.

I respectfully urge the favorable passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phylcia R. L. Porter".

Councilwoman Phylcia Porter, MPH, MSL

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Chair, Public Health and Environment Committee

Baltimore City Council - District 10