



Date: February 24, 2026

To: House Appropriations Committee

Reference: House Bill 561: Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of The Family Tree, we are pleased to submit supportive testimony for HB561. As the Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center and Maryland's leading nonprofit dedicated to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect, we see firsthand the critical importance of investing in the childcare workforce. The Family Tree strongly supports HB561 – Maryland Child Care Credential Program: Extension of Funding.

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is a proven and effective initiative, but it relies on consistent, dedicated funding to remain viable. Securing foundational funding is essential to sustaining its impact. The program recognizes childcare professionals who exceed basic licensing requirements and serves as a key workforce incentive within Maryland's quality improvement system. Through achievement bonuses, training reimbursements, and training vouchers, it enables committed providers to advance their education, strengthen their skills, and remain in the field.

We cannot afford to weaken a program that enhances the quality of care, promotes workforce retention, and supports Maryland's broader economic stability. Childcare providers are the backbone of our economy, making it possible for working families to participate in the workforce. Allowing this essential program to lapse would undermine both families and small childcare businesses across the state.

The Child Care Credential Program is fundamental to cultivating a stable, qualified workforce and sustaining the small businesses that families rely on every day. With many providers earning less than \$30,000 annually, the program's bonuses and training stipends are not supplemental luxuries— they are critical supports that directly improve quality and professional growth.

We respectfully urge your favorable support of HB561 to ensure continued investment in Maryland's children, families, and economy.

Respectfully submitted,

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