



February 16, 2026

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 467 – Extend Funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program

We respectfully urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 467. The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is a proven workforce support that strengthens the early care and education sector across our state. The program recognizes providers and educators who go beyond minimum licensing requirements by achieving higher levels of professional training and meeting rigorous quality benchmarks within Maryland's career lattice. SB 467 ensures that this program remains a meaningful incentive for quality improvement and workforce stability by extending foundational funding beginning in FY 2028.

In Montgomery County, and across the state, we are facing an early childhood workforce crisis. A recent study conducted by the Montgomery County Government on Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Compensation¹ found that:

- One in five educators earn less than \$15,000 per year, below the poverty level
- Nine out of ten earn less than \$75,000, which is the average 12-month salary for teachers at Montgomery County public schools
- One in six has no health insurance at all
- Pay is not enough to cover basic needs; one in five educators takes on additional employment
- 37% utilize public safety net programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, etc.

Issues with compensation lead to higher turnover and lower quality of education for young children. The Maryland Child Care Credential Program works – to encourage educational advancement, business stabilization, and as a recruitment and retention tool – but it requires sustained funding to maintain its impact. Without stable funding, however, its effectiveness is weakened. When financial incentives become uncertain, there is little reason for providers to exceed minimum licensing standards. Compensation tied to credential achievement becomes unreliable, participation in professional development declines, and quality improvement efforts stall. Suspending or destabilizing funding undermines the integrity of Maryland's quality systems at a time when families and children need stronger early learning environments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jahromi".

Laura Jahromi, Manager, Strategic Initiatives
The Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance
1801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 | 301-450-1871 |
laura@mocochildren.org

The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/CYF/MCCCRRC/ReportData.html) connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts all young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

¹ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/CYF/MCCCRRC/ReportData.html>