



March 9, 2026

Testimony in Support of SB 467 Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding
Submitted to: Budget and Taxation Committee **March 11, 2026 Position: FAVORABLE**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl, and I serve as the Senior Director of the Latino Child Care Association of Maryland (LCAM). Our association represents Family Child Care educators and child care centers across the state, many of whom serve multilingual, multicultural communities and operate with deep commitment despite significant financial and structural challenges. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 467, which extends funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

LCAM's members include educators with decades of experience, many of whom have achieved high levels of professional preparation, accreditation, and quality improvement. The Maryland Child Care Credential Program has been a critical resource for these educators. It recognizes their ongoing professional development, supports their advancement, and affirms the value of the work they do every day for Maryland's children and families.

For both Family Child Care programs and centers, the credential program plays a vital role in workforce stability. Recruiting and retaining qualified educators is one of the greatest challenges in our field. Many early childhood professionals earn modest wages while carrying immense responsibility for children's development, safety, and early learning. The financial incentives and recognition provided through the credential program help educators remain in the profession and continue building their skills.

The program also promotes equity. Many of our Latino educators—particularly those for whom English is a second language—face additional barriers in accessing professional development. The credential program helps level the playing field by offering structured pathways, financial support, and recognition for their hard work. Extending funding ensures that these pathways remain accessible and that Maryland continues to invest in a diverse, multilingual, and highly skilled workforce.

High-quality early childhood education depends on educators who are supported, valued, and given opportunities to grow. SB 467 strengthens the foundation of Maryland's early childhood system by sustaining a program that directly benefits educators, children, and families.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 467 and continue supporting the early childhood professionals who are essential to Maryland's future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, **Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl** Senior Director Latino Child Care Association of Maryland (LCAM)