

SB 503 growing FCC final Feb 18 MSCCA pdf.pdf

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Position: FAV



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

Maryland State Child Care Association

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The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over five thousand members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

Support Testimony: Senate Bill 503– Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program – Funding Submitted to: Budget and Taxation Committee Date: February 18, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland State Child Care Association strongly supports SB 503, which ensures sustained funding for the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program. This program is critical to expanding high-quality family child care opportunities across the state and supporting the professionals who provide them. Maryland has seen a steady and alarming decline in child care post COVID leaving less access for working families to child care, especially infant and toddler slots.

Purpose of SB 503:

- Requires the Governor to include \$450,000 in the annual budget for the Program for fiscal years 2023, 2024, 2026, and 2028 through 2030.
- Allows federal funds to be used where authorized to satisfy the appropriation requirement.
- Ensures family child care providers can access start-up assistance for materials, curriculum, renovations, and other costs associated with opening or expanding high-quality family child care homes.

Why This Matters:

Maryland's families rely on accessible, safe, and affordable child care. Family child care providers serve as essential community partners, often operating in neighborhoods and providing options for working families. Funding this Program:

1. **Expands Child Care Access** – Grants help more providers open and sustain family child care homes, increasing the number of available child care slots in every region.
2. **Supports Small Business Owners** – Many family child care providers are small business owners; the fabric of communities, start-up and operational grants reduce financial barriers and strengthen program sustainability.
3. **Strengthens Workforce Stability** – By investing in family child care providers, Maryland helps retain skilled educators and caregivers in the field.
4. **Promotes Equity and Local Partnerships** – The Program requires collaboration with local jurisdictions and child care resource centers, ensuring that funding supports diverse communities and local priorities.

Conclusion:

SB 503 is an investment in Maryland's child care infrastructure, workforce, and families. By securing dedicated funding, this bill helps ensure that high-quality family child care remains accessible, sustainable, and equitable.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 503.

SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of SB 503 20

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Position: FAV



Testimony - SB 503, Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program - Funding
Favorable

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

February 18, 2026

Christopher C. Cano, MPA

Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Guzzone & Members of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee:

SEIU Local 500 is in strong support of Senate Bill 503. This legislation is an important step toward strengthening Maryland's child care infrastructure by supporting family child care providers and expanding child care capacity across the state.

SEIU Local 500 represents early childhood educators and family child care providers who serve children and families in Maryland. Family child care providers are a critical pillar of our child care system. They operate small businesses—from their homes—offering flexible, community-based care that meets the needs of working families, including those with nontraditional work schedules.

Yet family child care providers face significant operational and regulatory challenges that can limit their ability to expand or even sustain their programs. SB 503 addresses these barriers in a way that supports provider stability and encourages capacity growth by providing essential funding.

Maryland continues to face a shortage of child care slots, particularly in underserved and rural communities. Family child care homes are uniquely positioned to help close that gap. They can open more quickly than larger centers, serve mixed-age groups, and operate in neighborhoods where larger facilities may not be feasible. When we support family child care providers, we directly increase access for families who are struggling to find care.

SB 503 will help reduce barriers that prevent family child care providers from opening or expanding their programs and support small business sustainability within the child care sector. It will increase the number of available child care slots across the state and strengthen access in child care deserts and underserved communities

Family child care providers are often women, immigrants, and entrepreneurs who reinvest directly into their communities. Policies that recognize their contributions and remove unnecessary obstacles allow them to grow their businesses and serve more children.

Expanding child care capacity is essential to Maryland's workforce participation and economic growth, with a large return on investment for the state. When families cannot access affordable, reliable care, they are forced to reduce work hours or leave the workforce altogether. Supporting family child care providers is a practical, community-driven strategy to address this challenge.

SB 503 reflects a commitment to growing Maryland's child care supply in a thoughtful and sustainable way. By strengthening family child care, we strengthen families, communities, and the broader economy.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 503.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MD Catholic Conference_SB 503_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 18, 2026

SB 503
Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program - Funding

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 503. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 503 would continue to provide funding for the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program. The Conference supported Senate Bill 882 of 2024 to make the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program in the Department of Education permanent. Through the program, MSDE provides grants to local jurisdictions or child care licensing regions to increase the supply and ensure the sustainability of family child care providers in areas with higher numbers of low-income Marylanders. Provided therein was a very modest funding level of \$450,000, but only through FY2026. This legislation provides funding through FY2030.

Child Care is an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Additionally, the Church supports this bill as a part of its priority interest in alleviating poverty in our state, as enabling working parents' continued access to child care services is an imperative part of combating poverty. Often, a barrier to sustainable and full-time employment is the availability and affordability of reliable child care services. The State should thus do all it can to support access to child care services for working parents.

These grants provide much needed support to a promote growth of a vital and essential sector of Marylander's everyday lives. This program helps to reverse a trend of the declining number of child care providers in the state, thus providing greater access to child care options and stabilizing costs for Maryland parents.

The Conference appreciates your consideration, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 503.

SB 503_FAV_MFN_Eidman.pdf

Uploaded by: Lacey Eidman

Position: FAV



Testimony Concerning SB 503
“Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program - Funding”
Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 18, 2026

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports SB 503, which would continue funding for the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities (GO FCC) Program and increase the supply of family child care.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and their families. We have been active in state and federal debates on policies that address the needs of working families and are strongly committed to ensuring that they have the supports they need to care for their children while meeting the demands of their jobs.

Registered family child care is a critical component of Maryland's child care delivery system. Family child care providers offer care that most closely resembles the care that children receive in their own homes. Family child care providers care for many children who have special needs or need care during nontraditional hours. In rural areas, where population density may not support larger child care centers, family child care providers play a particularly important role. They also provide linguistically and culturally appropriate care within many communities in the State.

GO FCC guides aspiring child care providers through the State licensing process, gives them training in business concepts, and provides support for quality improvement and program sustainability. The program is expanding care in communities that had few or no child care options. Coaches do targeted recruiting in child care deserts and high-need communities. They provide training on things like contracts, marketing, fee structures, and taxes. Program graduates become small business owners who are meeting a need in their communities.

The program has achieved and documented remarkable outcomes, ultimately helping expand the supply of quality child care while supporting the efforts of low-income women—many in communities of color—to establish successful small businesses. From 2022 through the end of 2025, the program has opened 278 new family child care programs for a total of 1,957 new slots. Of note, 443 of the new slots that have opened were for infants and toddlers. Ninety three percent of GO FCC providers are still in business.

SB 503 will extend the commitment to this program and ensure that our State builds on its remarkable success. MFN urges your favorable consideration.

SB503 - King - Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FAV

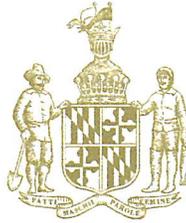
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MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Bill 503 – Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program – Funding

February 18, 2026

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee:

Even prior to the pandemic, the number of Family Child Care Programs (FCC) had been on the decline. These programs, which are different from Child Care Centers, are typically owned and run by women who care for up to eight children at a time in their homes. In Maryland the number of these Family Child Care programs have gone from approximately 12,500 in 1996 to 4300 in 2023. This is a trend that is mirrored nationally. There are many factors that have contributed to this decline: arduous approval processes through multiple layers of governments, lack of resources and support for their small business, and difficulties accessing professional development.

In 2015, a Montgomery County program was developed to help individuals who want to start a family child care program or need help with an existing program by providing resources not readily available or in some instances not available at all. This highly successful program has helped to create new family child care centers and opened up hundreds of new child care slots in some of the highest poverty areas in Montgomery County

In 2021 legislation was passed to take this very successful program and set up a pilot program in the State. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) administers the pilot program in concert with the State's network of child care resource centers. The results of this program have been exceptional. In the first full year of implementation, there were 320 participants. 101 participants received licenses which equates to 796 new child care slots.

In three years, Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC), has facilitated the opening of over 275 Family Child Care programs across the state and has increased the number of Family Child Care slots available to children by almost 2,000. GOFCC has also helped newly licensed providers to participate in [Maryland EXCELS](#), the state's quality rating and improvement system.

Maryland families depend on quality child care to allow parents to keep their jobs and support their families. This legislation supports not only the parents who need care for their children, but Marylanders who are trying to open and run a small business to support their families. Increasing the availability of high-quality child care is integral to the state's economic stability and this low cost, high impact program is a way to increase and retain childcare openings in Maryland.

Senate Bill 503 will continue funding for this highly successful program and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 503.

The Family Tree FAV SB 503 Growing Family Child C

Uploaded by: Stacey Brown

Position: FAV



SB 503 — Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program – Funding

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Hearing Date: February 18, 2026

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Family Tree we are pleased to submit supportive testimony for SB503 as Maryland’s leading nonprofit dedicated to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect in Baltimore City and across the state.

The Family Tree strongly supports SB 503, the resources made available through this legislation makes a critical investment in expanding quality childcare options for Maryland families. This matters to families and our communities as childcare is a cornerstone of family stability.

Reliable, quality early care by:

- Enables parents—especially working mothers and caregivers—to participate in the workforce without fear of losing stable care for their children.
- Supports healthy early childhood development, including socialization, early learning, and school readiness.
- Reduces stress on families, which is a known protective factor against child abuse and neglect.

For families served by The Family Tree, access to affordable, quality childcare is not a luxury—it is an essential component of economic security and healthy development. When parents are supported with dependable care options, children thrive, and families have the space to build resilience and stability.

The Family Tree’s mission is to **strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect** through evidence-based programs, home visiting, education, and support services. We see firsthand how the availability—or lack—of quality childcare affects a family’s ability to maintain employment, secure income, access community resources, and reduce stress. SB 503’s funding for the Family Child Care Opportunities Program aligns directly with these goals by expanding the infrastructure that helps families stay strong and children stay safe.

In 2025, The Family Tree continued to be a major provider of family-strengthening supports in Maryland:

- Through a comprehensive suite of research-based programs and services, The Family Tree reaches more than 21,000 individuals annually, including parents, children, and professionals across the state.
- The agency's Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center supported the launch of 60 new licensed family childcare programs in Baltimore City, adding 410 additional child care slots in neighborhoods where access was previously limited.
- These childcare expansions and direct services complement robust prevention work including parenting education, home visiting, professional trainings, and community outreach — all of which help parents build confidence, reduce stress, and strengthen family functioning.

These outcomes illustrate The Family Tree's **capacity to leverage strategic investments into measurable growth in childcare access and family support services**, which SB 503 would bolster through stable funding for family childcare development.

Investing in childcare is preventive public policy. By supporting SB 503's appropriation requirement, Maryland will help:

1. Expand high-quality childcare capacity for families in need.
2. Support the economic stability of working families.
3. Reduce stressors that contribute to child maltreatment.
4. Strengthen early childhood outcomes across the state.

For these reasons, **The Family Tree urges a favorable report on SB 503**. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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