

# **Testimony Statement\_ Credential .pdf**

Uploaded by: Brittany James

Position: FAV

## **Brittany S. James' Testimony in Support of SB467**

March 9, 2026

### **Position: Support**

My name is Brittany S. James and I am an education coordinator/disability services coordinator for a Baltimore City head start. I am writing to request your support for SB 467, which would restore funding to the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

The Child Care Credential Program was suspended in June 2024 due to budget constraints, affecting over 20,000 early childhood educators across Maryland who relied on it for professional development support and financial recognition of their expertise. This bill would restore this critical workforce investment.

I have participated in the Maryland Child Care Credential Program since 2010, when I was a new teacher entering the early childhood education field. After scoring a level one after my first submission and with very little understanding of the program at the time, I was determined to learn more and work toward the highest level possible. I was also motivated by the professional benefits offered through the credentialing program which supported the growth and advancement of early childhood educators.

Through the Child Care Credential Program, I've had the opportunity to attend accredited national conferences across the country for learning, networking, and professional inspiration. With diligence and commitment, I ultimately achieved a level six credential, the highest teacher level available. In May 2026, I will graduate from Towson University with my master's degree in early childhood education. This accomplishment is possible because of the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF), which is supported by the Child Care Credential Program.

Maryland faces an ongoing child care crisis and workforce shortage. Early childhood educators earn an average of \$34,000 per year—among the lowest wages in our economy—while performing work that is foundational to children's development and families' economic stability. The Child Care Credential Program was one of the few

mechanisms through which Maryland recognized these professionals' expertise and supported their continued education.

When we fail to support our early childhood workforce, we cannot maintain the stable, high-quality care that Maryland's children and working families need. The Credential Program is a proven investment that helps retain qualified educators, encourages professional growth, and ultimately improves outcomes for children. I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 467.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my voice.

# **SB 467 CC Credential Program Extension final Feb 1**

Uploaded by: Christina Peusch

Position: FAV



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

## **Maryland State Child Care Association**

2810 Carrollton Road  
Annapolis, Md. 21403  
Phone: (410) 820-9196  
Email: [info@mscca.org](mailto:info@mscca.org)  
[www.mscca.org](http://www.mscca.org)

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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.*

### **Testimony in Support of SB 467 Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding Submitted to: Budget and Taxation Feb. 18, 2026**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Maryland State Child Care Association strongly supports SB 467 to extend funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is one of our state's most effective workforce supports for the early care and education sector. It recognizes child care providers and educators who exceed minimum licensing requirements by achieving higher levels of professional training and quality benchmarks within Maryland's formal workforce lattice.

SB 467 ensures this program remains a meaningful incentive for quality improvement and workforce stability by extending foundational funding beginning in FY 2028.

This program works.

It incentivizes continued education and professional growth. It offsets the cost of credential attainment. Most importantly, it provides financial recognition for a workforce that remains underpaid despite the critical role it plays in supporting Maryland's families and economy.

The Credential Program is embedded within Maryland EXCELS and Maryland Accreditation as a key quality indicator. Without sustained funding:

- Incentives to exceed minimum licensing standards weaken
- Compensation tied to credential achievement becomes uncertain
- Professional development participation declines
- Quality improvement efforts stall

Child care programs operate on extremely thin margins. Most are small businesses where staffing costs dominate budgets, tuition is capped by family affordability, and profit margins are minimal. The Credential Program serves as a recruitment and retention strategy that helps:

- Attract qualified educators

- Retain experienced staff
- Reward professional advancement
- Reduce costly turnover

When credential funding becomes unstable, workforce instability increases and business sustainability declines. The early childhood workforce enables parents to work and businesses to function. Investing in credentialing is both an economic development strategy and an equity commitment to a workforce primarily composed of women.

Allowing funding to lapse would undermine Maryland's quality infrastructure and send the wrong message to educators who continue to demonstrate resilience under significant financial pressure.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 467.

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# **SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of SB 467 20**

Uploaded by: Christopher Cano

Position: FAV



Testimony - SB 467, Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of 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 represents thousands of working people across Maryland, including early childhood educators and family child care providers who are the backbone of our state's child care system. These professionals do the essential work of caring for and educating Maryland's youngest learners during the most critical years of brain development. Continued investment in the Maryland Child Care Credential Program is vital not only to their career advancement, but also to the healthy development of the children and families they serve.

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program provides achievement bonuses, training reimbursements, and vouchers to providers who pursue and maintain professional credentials. This structure recognizes what research and experience both tell us: higher levels of training and education in early childhood settings lead to stronger developmental outcomes for children. Credentialed providers are better equipped to support language development, early literacy, social-emotional growth, and school readiness.

Just as importantly, the program creates a meaningful career ladder for child care providers. For far too long, early childhood educators—overwhelmingly women and disproportionately women of color—have been underpaid and undervalued despite the complexity and importance of their work. The Credential Program affirms that child care is a profession. It incentivizes continued education, rewards skill-building, and supports retention in a field facing persistent workforce shortages.

Senate Bill 467 ensures that this progress is not temporary. By requiring ongoing appropriations at no less than the fiscal year 2024 level beginning in fiscal year 2028 and each year thereafter, the bill provides stability and predictability. That stability is critical for providers planning their professional development and for child care programs seeking to build and maintain a qualified workforce.

When we invest in credentialing, we invest in children's futures. High-quality early learning environments lay the foundation for academic success, workforce readiness, and long-term well-being. Supporting providers in advancing their credentials directly strengthens Maryland's education pipeline from its very first stage.

SEIU Local 500 urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 467 to ensure that Maryland continues to treat early childhood education as the essential profession it is and to sustain the professional growth of the workforce that cares for our children every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

# **SB 467 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cortney Cabrera

Position: FAV

I am writing to you on behalf of Hilltop Early Learning Center, Clarksville, MD, to express our support for SB 467. This bill would make significant strides in protecting and preserving the Maryland Child Care Credential Program for years to come.

For more than 20 years, the Maryland Child Care Credential Program recognized the dedicated child care providers who exceed basic licensing standards. Participants in the credential program worked hard and were incentivized to become active members of the early childhood education community. The credential program has provided a career ladder and guide to encourage professional development and growth in our industry. It has allowed our staff to demonstrate our dedication to ongoing learning and evolving pedagogy—we view ourselves as lifelong learners who are always striving to learn more in our field and try new things in our classrooms.

Our program is a small nonprofit preschool program. We function on very thin economic margins and are constantly balancing our financial needs with the burden working families face in paying for child care. The Maryland Child Care Credential Program has provided necessary funds that allow our staff to participate in consistent professional development and continued learning without placing further strain on our program's budget or our families' pocketbooks. The Child Care Credential Program also provided monetary incentives for child care workers who demonstrated exemplary commitment to becoming experts in their field. As we all recognize, child care workers are a historically underpaid workforce (many earning less than \$30,000 per year despite working full-time hours). These monetary achievement bonuses made a significant impact on employees' financial wellbeing and personal morale. The Child Care Credential Program creates stability in our field and lessens staff turnover.

I first started working in the child care field in the summer of 2014. At that time, I was inexperienced and had minimal education in the field. When my program director introduced me to the Child Care Credential Program, it gave me a road map to my future. With the help of the Child Care Credential Program, I was motivated and guided as I pursued multiple degrees in our field and progressed from a classroom aid to the associate director of our program. It is my sincere wish that all early childhood education professionals be able to benefit from the Child Care Credential Program for years to come.

Cortney Cabrera

Hilltop Early Learning Center

12121 Linden Linthicum Lane

Clarksville, MD 21029

# **SB 467 Testimony - Eileen Reyna BNS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Eileen Reyna

Position: FAV



Submitted to the Senate Budget and Tax Committee

**Position: Support**

Testimony regarding Senate Bill 467: Child Care Credential Program - Continuation

Hearing Date: March 11, 2026

March 9, 2026

Dear Chairman Guzzone and other Members of the Committee,

My name is Eileen Reyna, and I am the Director at Bannockburn Nursery School in Bethesda, MD. I am writing to request your support for SB 467, which would restore funding to the Maryland Child Care Credential Program. Its suspension in June 2024 affected more than 20,000 early childhood educators statewide, including the dedicated teachers in my own program, who relied on it for professional development support and for the state's recognition of their expertise.

At Bannockburn, I saw every day how meaningful this program was for my staff. Many of our teachers are parents themselves, juggling family responsibilities while taking evening classes, enrolling in degree programs, and completing the rigorous work required to advance through credential levels. They did this because they take pride in their profession and want to grow for the sake of the children they serve. When the program was abruptly defunded, the impact was immediate and deeply felt. Teachers who had worked so hard lost not only the financial bonuses they depended on, but also the sense of validation that the state saw and valued their efforts. Morale dropped, and several staff members questioned whether pursuing further education and participating in professional growth opportunities was still worth it when the promised support had disappeared.

For us, the Credential Program was more than a set of requirements. It was a clear, dignified career ladder that helped educators see a future for themselves in this field. Restoring it would send a powerful message that Maryland respects early childhood educators and understands that a stable, qualified workforce is essential to the well-being of children and families.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 467 and help rebuild a pathway that honors the commitment, professionalism, and aspirations of the educators who care for Maryland's youngest learners.

Sincerely,

Eileen Reyna  
Director

6314 Bannockburn Drive | Bethesda, MD 20817 | 301706-5720 | [www.bannockburnnurseryschool.com](http://www.bannockburnnurseryschool.com)

# **COA\_Written Testimony\_SB 467\_Extend Funding for th**

Uploaded by: Laura Jahromi

Position: FAV



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 Compensation<sup>1</sup> 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](mailto: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.

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

**SB467 MCDHHS FAV MGA26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550**

**ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270**

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**SB 467**

**DATE: February 18, 2026**

**SPONSOR: Senator King**

**ASSIGNED TO: Budget & Taxation**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey** ([leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov))

**POSITION: FAVORABLE (Department of Health and Human Services)**

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### **Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding**

Senate Bill 467 requires the Governor to include at least \$5.3M in the State budget beginning in Fiscal Year 2028 and each year thereafter to fund the Maryland Child Care Credential Program (the Program). The Program permits the Maryland Office of Child Care to award an individual an achievement bonus, a training reimbursement, or a training voucher if the individual pursues, obtains, or already holds an Office-approved child care credential.

According to the 2025 Montgomery County Early Care and Education Workforce and Compensation Study, one in five early educators earn below the federal poverty level for a family of four with two income earners, and more than four in five earn below the County's self-sufficiency standard. Additionally, nine out of ten early educators earn less than the entry-level salary of a Montgomery County Public Schools teacher.

In alignment with the Year One implementation priorities outlined in the study's recommendations, the dedicated funding for educator bonuses and training reimbursements directly provided for by Senate Bill 467 advances the shared objectives between Montgomery County and the State to increase scholarship and professional development funding. By leveraging partnerships with higher education institutions and state resources, we can better support early educators in attaining degrees, credentials, and meaningful opportunities for career advancement within the field.

Sustaining and expanding the early care and education workforce is not only an investment in our youngest learners, but a critical investment in the State's economic vitality. When early educators are adequately compensated and supported, families benefit from stable, high-quality care, parents are able to fully participate in the workforce, and communities thrive. Strategic, sustained funding ensures a stronger, more equitable early learning system—one that supports educators, families, and the long-term prosperity of the State as a whole.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services respectfully requests a favorable committee report.

# **Written Testimony in Support of SB 467 - Critchlow**

Uploaded by: Liz Connelly

Position: FAV



**Written Testimony in Support of SB 467  
Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding  
From: Critchlow Adkins Children’s Centers, Talbot County, MD**

I am writing in support of **Maryland Senate Bill 467**, which extends funding for the **Maryland Child Care Credential Program**. This program is essential to strengthening Maryland’s early childhood workforce by supporting professional development and career advancement for childcare educators.

At Critchlow Adkins, we see the value of this program every day. Many of our teachers are deeply dedicated to their profession, but like much of the early childhood workforce, they are paid at the margins. Without programs like the Child Care Credential Program, many simply would not have the financial ability to pursue additional coursework, training, and credential levels that help them grow in their careers.

One of our long-time teachers began working with children because she loved helping young learners grow and discover the world around them. Through the credential program, she was able to take courses and advance her professional credentials—something she has often said would not have been possible otherwise. Today, she leads a vibrant classroom and mentors newer educators, sharing the knowledge and confidence she gained along the way.

Another teacher recently told us that earning higher credential levels through the program helped her feel recognized as a professional educator. For someone working hard each day to nurture young children, that recognition matters. It also motivates teachers to continue improving their skills and deepening the quality of care they provide.

When educators are supported in their professional growth, children benefit from stronger learning environments, more stable classrooms, and more experienced teachers. The Child Care Credential Program helps make that possible by investing in the workforce and educators who care for Maryland’s youngest learners.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 467. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Liz Connelly  
Development Director  
Critchlow Adkins Children’s Centers  
Easton, MD

**SB0467 Molly McGriff Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Molly McGriff

Position: FAV

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 0467.

The childcare sector faces numerous challenges, but none is more critical than staffing. With low pay, minimal benefits, and demanding working conditions, dedicated professionals leave the field not by choice, but out of necessity, forced to pursue higher paying jobs to support their families. This exodus of experienced educators undermines the stability and quality of care that Maryland's children deserve.

The Child Care Credential Program was a vital intervention designed to address this crisis. It supported our early childhood professionals through bonus pay while incentivizing professional development that makes teachers better educators and improves both the quality of care and outcomes for children. This program recognized what research consistently shows: investing in educator credentials translates directly into better experiences and stronger developmental foundations for young learners.

In June 2024, the program abruptly disappeared due to a budgeting oversight at MSDE. The loss was sudden and devastating to providers and educators who had come to rely on this support. Countless professionals who were pursuing credentials or counting on bonus payments were left in limbo. We cannot allow such instability to happen again.

I urge you to support House Senate Bill 0467. The Child Care Credential Program is a proven workforce support that strengthens our early childhood education system. We cannot afford to lose it again, and we must ensure legislative protections so that it remains a stable pillar of support for Maryland's childcare professionals.

Respectfully,

Molly McGriff  
Senior Director, Untied for Childcare  
United Way of Central Maryland  
(410) 895-1383, [molly.mcgriff@uwcm.org](mailto:molly.mcgriff@uwcm.org)

# **SB 467 MD Child care credential program extension**

Uploaded by: RANDI ALBERTSEN

Position: FAV

## Testimony in Support of SB 467

### Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding

Submitted to Budget and Taxation Committee

March, 11, 2026

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program works. It's one of the few workforce supports in our early care and education system that actually recognizes what we say we value: educators and providers who go beyond minimum licensing requirements, keep learning, and keep improving practice for children and families. The Credential Program is a clear, concrete incentive built into Maryland's workforce lattice, and it's already embedded in the quality systems many programs are working hard to meet—Maryland EXCELS, Maryland Accreditation, and the expectations set in law through HB 1441.

But a program can't do what it was designed to do if the funding underneath it is unstable.

SB 467 matters because it protects the integrity of the Credential Program by extending foundational funding beginning in FY 2028. That may sound like a technical budget detail, but on the ground, it's the difference between a meaningful incentive and an empty promise. When funding is uncertain, the message to educators is clear: don't count on this. And when educators can't count on it, fewer people take on the extra coursework, the extra training hours, the extra effort it takes to reach higher credential levels. Programs lose one of their few reliable tools for encouraging professional growth. Quality improvement slows down - not because people don't care, but because the system stops backing up the work with real support.

This is also a small business issue. Most childcare programs are operating on razor-thin margins, often less than 1%. Staffing is the biggest cost driver because ratios are non-negotiable, and tuition is largely parent-funded and limited by what families can afford. At the same time, childcare costs in Maryland can exceed \$30,000 a year, while the average childcare worker earns under \$30,000 annually. That mismatch is unsustainable, and every director and provider I know is constantly trying to do the impossible: keep tuition within reach, pay staff more, meet regulations, and still keep the doors open.

In that reality, the Credential Program isn't a "nice extra." It's a practical tool for recruitment and retention. It helps programs attract qualified staff, keep experienced educators, and recognize professional growth in a way that builds stability over time. When credential funding lapses or becomes unreliable, turnover increases, staffing becomes harder, and the entire program becomes more fragile. We don't just lose a benefit; we lose one of the few levers that support workforce stability in a field where stability is everything.

There's also an equity and economic reality we need to say out loud. The childcare workforce is primarily composed of diverse women of color. Childcare enables parents to work and keep Maryland's economy moving. Investing in credentialing is not only a quality strategy; it's an economic strategy and an equity commitment. When funding for credentialing is allowed to lapse, it signals that professional growth and



workforce advancement are optional. That erodes trust across the provider community and weakens the infrastructure Maryland has worked to build.

As an MSDE-approved trainer for early childhood programs, I've seen the ripple effects when the Credential Program funding is unavailable. It shows up immediately in the professional learning choices programs are forced to make. Fewer childcare centers seek training, not because they don't value it, but because they can't justify the cost when the incentives and supports tied to credentialing feel shaky. Instead, educators and programs go searching for free professional development wherever they can find it, often meaning online, self-paced options that may check a box but don't meet Maryland's specific requirements or the real needs of classrooms. Just as importantly, those options can't replace the human, responsive support an approved trainer provides: the ability to tailor content to a program's context, answer questions in the moment, adjust based on what staff are actually dealing with, and offer the relationship-based coaching that strengthens practice over time. When funding disappears, we don't just lose a benefit. We lose access to the kind of high-quality, relevant, flexible learning that builds a stable workforce and improves instruction for children.

SB 467 is a straightforward, responsible step: extend foundational funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program beginning in FY 2028, stabilize childcare businesses, and demonstrate Maryland's commitment to the early childhood workforce. It also strengthens alignment across quality initiatives by supporting an ongoing career lattice connected to professional development—so programs aren't chasing disconnected requirements, but building toward a system that actually makes sense and supports educators to stay.

Maryland cannot afford to weaken a program that supports children and the workforce behind the workforce. Investing in credentialing strengthens quality, workforce stability, small business sustainability, and Maryland's economy. I urge you to support SB 467.



**SB467 - Testimony - Credential Program 3-11-26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rebecca Hancock

Position: FAV



Testimony Concerning SB467 – Maryland Child Care Credential  
Program – Extension of Funding

Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

March 11, 2026

Position: Support

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a non-profit association advocating on behalf of registered early childhood educators providers in Maryland. These small businesses are a vital part of the child care delivery and the early education system in Maryland. Family child care offers a unique learning environment, flexible enough to meet each child's needs individually and the special relationships formed by children of various ages in family child care enhances the learning experience for all.

Most family early childhood educators and large family child care homes are owned and operated by women, many of whom are minority and single income families.

Currently, Maryland is experiencing a child care crisis, especially for those families who have children under the age of two (2). With early educators leaving the profession at an exponentially alarming rate this crisis will continue and only get worse. There are several reasons for this mass exodus, one of which is financial instability.

The Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) Credential Program has been a vital program for Maryland's Early Childhood Educators as well as center providers. This program, in the past, has offered Maryland's Early Educators training vouchers/reimbursements and incentive bonuses. The reimbursement has played an essential part in paying for training for providers to maintain their training requirements from MSDE and to maintain the high quality of their programs. The bonuses have enabled providers to purchase materials, equipment, and additional training courses, i.e., conferences that also are re-invested in their programs.

Early Educators throughout the country, not just Maryland, are one of the lowest paid careers and any program that can help offset some of the financial burden on these providers so that they can continue to provide high-quality child care is essential.

MSFCCA has been a consistent leader in early care and education policy and giving SB467 a favorable vote will be a step forward in saving an industry that is vitally important to Maryland families and the economy.

MSFCCA appreciates the opportunity to comment on this legislation and welcomes any questions or comments. Feel free to contact Rebecca Hancock, the MSFCCA Vice President of Public Policy at (240) 299-0222 (cell), (301) 934-4445 (home), or [kaysplayhousechildcare@gmail.com](mailto:kaysplayhousechildcare@gmail.com) to answer any questions concerning this testimony.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Hancock  
Vice-President  
Public Policy  
Maryland Stat Family Child Association

**LCAM-Testimony SB467.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl

Position: FAV



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)

**Written SB467 pdf credential.pdf**

Uploaded by: RUBY DANIELS

Position: FAV



## Written Testimony in Support of

# Senate Bill 467

### **Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding Senate Budget and Taxation Committee Date of Hearing: March 11, 2026**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ruby Daniels. I am a family childcare provider in Howard County with over 30 years of experience, and I serve as President of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association, representing a little over 4,000 family childcare providers across Maryland including large family child care homes.

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 467 and to ask that you **continue funding the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.**

This program plays an important role in **supporting the early childhood workforce by helping reimburse the cost of professional development training and conference fees.** Many early childhood educators often referred to as family childcare providers, including myself **rely** on this program to continue **improving our skills and strengthening the quality of care we provide to children.**

Family childcare providers are small business owners who often work alone in our homes, serving children for long hours so that parents can go to work. Professional development is essential to maintaining high-quality early learning experiences, but the cost of training and conferences can be difficult to afford on our own.

In FY25, when the Child Care Credential Program **was not funded**, many home-based early childhood educators **struggled** to pay for professional development. Providers often rely on the \$400 training voucher that can be used directly toward conference or training fees, or to reimburse related expenses. Many providers do not even use the full amount, but whatever assistance is available helps make professional development more accessible.

Conferences and trainings provide much more than coursework. They offer access to new resources, updated information, and opportunities for peer-to-



**Maryland State  
Family Child Care  
Association**  
www.msfccca.org

peer networking and mentoring. Many family childcare providers work in isolation, so these gatherings provide valuable **support and connection that help strengthen our practice and sustain our profession.**

In FY26, the program was restarted, and we are grateful for that support. However, **rebuilding the system up and running takes time.** Consistent funding moving forward is important so providers can continue planning their professional growth and meeting the state's expectations for **higher quality early childhood programs.**

Maryland has made clear that improving the **quality of early childhood education is a priority.** Maintaining the Child Care Credential Program is one of the most practical ways to support that goal. When educators have access to professional learning opportunities, a better educated workforce can provide quality early childhood learning experiences for Maryland's children.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report on Senate Bill 467** and continued funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

Thank you for your time and consideration and for your continued support of Maryland's early childhood educators.

Respectfully submitted,

**Ruby Daniels**

President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association  
Family Child Care Provider, Howard County, Maryland  
rubygd33@gmail.com

# **SB467 Writing Testimony (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Ruth Carolina Reyes

Position: FAV



# ARCO IRIS

## BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER

**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**

**Ruth Carolina Reyes**

**Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center**

**14502 Greenview Drive, suite102**

**301-483-8800 Center**

**301-538-1978 Cellular**

**[arcoirisbcc@gmail.com](mailto:arcoirisbcc@gmail.com)**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Carolina Reyes, and I am the owner and director of a Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center serving families a diverse group of families from three different counties. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 467, which extends funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

As a child care director and small business owner, I see firsthand how important the Maryland Child Care Credential Program is for supporting the professional growth and stability of the early childhood workforce. This program recognizes educators who go beyond the basic licensing requirements by continuing their education, completing professional development, and working to improve the quality of care they provide to young children.

In my program, professional development and continuous learning are essential. Many of my teachers work very hard to complete training and advance within the credential system while also balancing their responsibilities as educators, parents, and community members. The credential program not only supports their professional growth but also recognizes their dedication and commitment to providing high-quality care and education for young children.

However, we must also acknowledge the financial realities facing the child care workforce. Early childhood educators are responsible for shaping the foundation of children's development, yet many are paid very modest wages. Programs like the Maryland Child Care Credential Program provide important incentives and financial recognition for educators who invest their time and effort in professional development and quality improvement.

For child care programs like mine, this program also helps attract and retain qualified staff. Recruiting and keeping experienced educators is one of the biggest challenges facing the child care field today. When educators feel that their professional growth is supported and valued, they are more likely to remain in the field and continue serving children and families.

High-quality early childhood education depends on a strong and stable workforce. Extending funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program helps ensure that educators can continue advancing their skills, improving program quality, and strengthening the early childhood system across Maryland.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to give a favorable report on SB 467 and continue supporting the educators who provide the foundation for children's learning and development.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carolina Reyes

Owner & Director, Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

# **SB467 - King - Sponsor Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FAV

NANCY J. KING  
*Legislative District 39*  
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Chair*  
Education, Business and  
Administration Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 467 – Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program – Extension of Funding**

March 10, 2026

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee:

The Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program was established as part of The Blueprint for Maryland's Future and was designed to recognize and reward individual child care providers who go above and beyond state licensing requirements. The program serves as a part of Maryland's early childhood education workforce strategy, to support professional development, improve child care quality, and incentivize providers to pursue higher levels of training and education.

The program's funding was mandated under the Blueprint through Fiscal Year 2024. Unfortunately, the funding was not included in the FY 2025 budget, so the program lapsed for one year. Funding was restored for FY 2026 but was not included in the Governor's FY 2027 budget.

The one year lapse in funding had significant consequences. Roughly 8,400 child care providers were unable to renew their credentials for more than a year. Providers were also unable to access promised state funding to help defray their costs for professional development. Even when funding resumed at the start of FY 2026, the program still didn't get back up and running for nearly seven months because MSDE had to go through the procurement process to get a new vendor to administer the application webportal.

This disruption had a tangible impact on our child care workforce, creating uncertainty and halting career advancement efforts for many, and undermining a program that childcare professionals had come to rely on for recognition and reimbursement for professional training. Senate Bill 467 will ensure that the Maryland Child Care Credential Program is protected from future funding interruptions by restoring mandated funding and maintaining continuity of operations.

Our early childhood educators are an essential part of the economic infrastructure of our state and the Maryland Child Care Credentialing program is a vital resource for recruitment, advancement and retention of our state's early childhood educators. Passage of this legislation will ensure stability and predictability in a program that elevates our early childhood educators and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 467.

# **The Family Tree FAV Senate Bill 467 Maryland Child**

Uploaded by: Stacey Brown

Position: FAV



Date: March 11, 2026

To: Senate Budget & Tax Committee

Reference: Senate Bill 467: Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding Position:  
Favorable

Dear Chair Guzzone and Committee Members,

On behalf of The Family Tree, we are pleased to submit supportive testimony for SB467. 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 SB467 – 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 SB467 to ensure continued investment in Maryland's children, families, and economy.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Brown, M.Ed, LCPC

Executive Director-The Family Tree

Phone: (410) 889-2300 x 75361 [sbrown@familytreemd.org](mailto:sbrown@familytreemd.org) [familytreemd.org](http://familytreemd.org)

**SB0467- State Board & MSDE - Support.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Stefan Redding-Lallinger

Position: FAV

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**TO:** Senate Committee on Budget & Taxation

**BILL:** SB0467 - Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding

**DATE:** March 11, 2026

**POSITION:** Letter of Support

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The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the State Department of Education (MSDE) extends its support for SB0467- Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding. This legislation requires the Governor to appropriate each year to the Maryland Child Care Credential Program, an amount that is equal to the amount (\$4,000,000) appropriated in fiscal year (FY) 2024, beginning in FY 2028.

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is a long-standing, voluntary program designed to strengthen and support Maryland's early childhood workforce. After serving more than 10,000 participants in FY 2024, the program experienced a one-year funding interruption in FY 2025 due to budget constraints and was not in operation. With the annual appropriation of funds proposed in SB0467 to support the Maryland Child Care Credential Program, this funding will enable:

- Financial incentives, including achievement bonuses and training reimbursements.
- Professional development support through approved training and education.
- Career advancement pathways via the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF), enabling degree attainment.
- Integration with Maryland's Career Lattice, recognizing all positions in the child care workforce and supporting upward mobility.
- A commitment to quality by requiring ongoing training and education, improving early learning environments for Maryland's children.

Statutory funding for the program will end at the conclusion of FY 2026. While SB0467 provides funding for FY 2028, it does not include an appropriation for FY 2027. Absent additional funding, this gap would result in a second interruption of the Maryland Child Care Credential Program within a four-year period.

The program is designed to provide consistent support to the child care workforce at a time when programs are facing significant challenges with staff retention and recruitment of qualified, high-quality personnel. During the previous disruption, the child care community and interest holders regularly communicated the substantial impact of the break in service, underscoring the program's value. A second interruption would not only negatively affect the community we serve but also undermine the considerable amount of time and resources MSDE invested to restart the program, resulting in inefficiencies and potential waste of funds, which our state budget cannot afford.

MSDE recognizes the State's current fiscal climate and the need to balance competing budget priorities. While we strongly support the Child Care Credential Program, we acknowledge that implementation must be considered within available State resources.

In summary, the Maryland Child Care Credential Program is essential for workforce retention, quality improvement, and access to higher education. This legislation would secure mandated funding for the Credential Program, ensuring stability and continued support for professional growth and quality in early childhood education, child outcomes and school readiness.

We request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates **SB0467**. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at [Laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov](mailto:Laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov) if you would like any additional information.

**SB467 MDAEYC FAV.docx (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Stephanie Schaefer

Position: FAV



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

**Testimony in Support of SB 467**  
**"Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding"**  
**Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**March 9, 2026**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) supports SB 467, which would restore and extend funding to the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

MDAEYC is a professional association of 1,700 early childhood educators, allied professionals, and families. We promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood education practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

We support SB 467 because Maryland's early childhood workforce is in crisis, and the suspension of the Child Care Credential Program has exacerbated this crisis. The program was suspended on June 30, 2024, due to lack of funding in the state budget, affecting over 20,000 early childhood educators. Funds were restored for Fiscal Year 2025, but the program is unfunded for Fiscal Year 2026.

Maryland faces an ongoing child care crisis and workforce shortage. Early childhood educators earn an average of \$34,000 per year—among the lowest wages in our economy—while performing work that is foundational to children's development and families' economic stability.<sup>1</sup> The Child Care Credential Program was one of the few mechanisms through which Maryland recognized these professionals' expertise and supported their continued education.

When we fail to support our early childhood workforce, we cannot maintain the stable, high-quality care that Maryland's children and working families need. The Credential Program is a proven investment that helps retain qualified educators, encourages professional growth, and ultimately improves outcomes for children.

Child care is essential infrastructure for Maryland's economy. When child care educators lack support and leave the field, child care programs close or reduce capacity, and working families are forced to reduce work hours, turn down opportunities, or leave the workforce entirely. The Child Care Credential Program is not simply a workforce support; it is an investment in Maryland's economic vitality and the well-being of children and families across the state.

For these reasons, MDAEYC supports SB 467 and respectfully requests a favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup> First Five Years Fund. (2026, January 26). *Child Care and Early Learning in Maryland*. <https://www.ffyf.org/states/maryland/>

# **DBM LOI SB467 Maryland Child Care Credential Progr**

Uploaded by: Dana Phillips

Position: INFO

WES MOORE  
*Governor*

ARUNA MILLER  
*Lieutenant Governor*



YAAKOV "JAKE" WEISSMANN  
*Acting Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

## **SB467 - Maryland Child Care Credential Program - Extension of Funding**

### **Letter of Information**

**DATE:** March 11th 2026

**COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation Committee

**POSITION:** Letter of Information

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** This bill mandates that the Governor appropriate annual funding for the Maryland Child Care Credentialing program equal to or greater than the funding included in the FY 2024 Appropriation, starting in FY 2028.

**EXPLANATION:** The funding appropriation in FY 2024 was \$5,687,000, so this bill would mandate \$5,687,000 starting in FY 2028. There is no sunset to this mandate so the funding requirement would continue indefinitely. There was previously a mandate that sunsetted in FY 2026, and no funding was included in the FY 2027 Allowance. Therefore, this would require an increase of the full amount in FY 2028.

Given the significant uncertainty in federal policy and the escalating fiscal shortfalls forecasted through Fiscal Year 2028, the Department urges caution against legislation that increases expenditures or diverts revenue without sustainable funding offsets. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the State must remain disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services for all Marylanders.

**For additional information, contact Dana Phillips at  
(410) 260-6068 or [dana.phillips@maryland.gov](mailto:dana.phillips@maryland.gov)**