



**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 5500 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.*

### **HB 1259 Zoning Authorities – Operation of Family Child Care Homes – Prohibitions and Requirements**

**Submitted to: Economic Matters Committee**

**March 5, 2026**

**Position: Favorable**

#### **Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:**

Maryland State Child Care Association is in **strong support of House Bill 1259**, legislation that provides critical and long-overdue protection for **family child care homes and large family child care homes** across Maryland.

#### **Child Care Is in Crisis—Family Child Care Is Essential**

Maryland is facing a **serious decline in child care availability**, particularly among **family child care providers**, who serve as the backbone of our early childhood system. These providers offer safe, licensed, community-based care that allows **parents—especially working mothers and fathers—to participate in the workforce.**

#### **Child care is the workforce behind the workforce.**

When child care disappears, parents are forced to reduce work hours, leave jobs entirely, or turn down employment opportunities—hurting families, employers, and the broader economy.

#### **HB 1259 Protects Licensed Providers from Harmful Local Barriers**

HB 1259 rightly ensures that **local jurisdictions may not deny or restrict the operation of family child care homes that meet state licensing requirements.** Providers who are fully licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education should not face **punitive, inconsistent, or arbitrary zoning restrictions** simply because they operate from their homes.

This bill:

- Prevents local governments from imposing child-capacity limits below state authorization
- Prohibits the denial or restriction of licensed family child care homes
- Requires these homes to be treated as a **residential activity and a permitted residential use**

These protections are not radical, they are **reasonable, fair, and necessary.**

#### **Smart Regulation, Not Punitive Measures**

Family child care providers are **small, home-based businesses** that already meet **rigorous health, safety, and licensing standards**. Additional zoning barriers do not improve safety; they only:

- Reduce child care supply
- Increase costs for families
- Force providers out of business
- Push child care into unregulated or informal settings

HB 1259 promotes **smart regulation**, not over-regulation—ensuring oversight remains where it belongs: at the state licensing level.

### **An Economic and Equity Imperative**

Child care is both an **economic and equity issue**. Family child care homes often serve:

- Infants and toddlers
- Non-traditional work schedules
- Diverse and underserved communities
- Families who need care close to home

When these providers are blocked by zoning laws, the harm falls disproportionately on **working families, women, and communities of color**. Supporting family child care strengthens not only our economy, but the **social fabric of our neighborhoods**.

HB 1259 sends a clear message:

Maryland values families, children, and the providers who make work possible.

By removing unnecessary zoning barriers and affirming family child care as a permitted residential use, this bill:

- Supports working parents
- Stabilizes the child care sector
- Strengthens local economies
- Upholds fairness and consistency statewide

For these reasons, MSCCA urges a **Favorable Report on HB 1259**.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and commitment to Maryland's families.