



Testimony - HB 543, Real Property - Landlord and Tenant - Family Child Care Homes
Favorable

House Economic Matters Committee

February 19, 2026

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

Honorable Chairwoman Valderrama & Members of the House Economic Matters
Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents thousands of working people across Maryland, including early childhood educators and family child care providers who operate small businesses in communities across our state. House Bill 543 is a practical and necessary step to expand Maryland's child care capacity at a time when young families are struggling to find affordable, accessible care.

Demand for child care in Maryland continues to rise as more families return to in-person work and as the cost of living places greater pressure on households to maintain dual incomes. Yet too many parents remain on waitlists or are forced to leave the workforce because child care slots simply are not available. Family child care homes—small, home-based programs serving up to eight children—are one of the fastest and most community-rooted ways to meet that demand.

Unfortunately, prospective providers who rent their homes often face outright prohibitions or unreasonable barriers from landlords when they attempt to open a registered family child care home. These restrictions limit the growth of small, women-owned businesses and directly reduce the number of child care seats available to Maryland families.

House Bill 543 strikes a careful and balanced approach. It:

- Prohibits landlords of single-family rental properties from unreasonably prohibiting or limiting the operation of a registered family child care home;

- Provides landlords with clear protections from liability for a tenant's child care operations;
- Allows landlords to require appropriate insurance coverage; and
- Permits an increased security deposit when a tenant operates or plans to operate a family child care home.

This framework protects property owners while removing arbitrary barriers that prevent qualified providers from serving children in their communities. It recognizes family child care providers as small business operators who deserve the opportunity to meet growing demand—especially in child care deserts and underserved neighborhoods.

Expanding the number of family child care businesses will benefit Maryland's young families in multiple ways. It increases supply, which helps stabilize prices. It creates flexible, culturally responsive care options. It strengthens neighborhood-based early learning. And it allows parents to remain in the workforce, supporting Maryland's broader economy.

At a time when Maryland continues to invest in early childhood education and workforce participation, we must ensure that housing policies do not unintentionally choke off the very providers we need most. House Bill 543 removes those barriers while respecting landlord interests and maintaining appropriate safeguards.

SEIU Local 500 urges a favorable report on House Bill 543 to help expand family child care businesses and meet the rising demand facing young families across Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

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