



Testimony - SB 664, Child Care Scholarship Program - Priority for Child Care Providers
Favorable

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 4, 2026

Christopher C. Cano, MPA

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

Honorable Chairman Feldman & Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports Senate Bill 664. Our union represents thousands of working people in Maryland, including licensed child care providers who are essential to the stability of our state's early childhood education system.

Maryland's child care providers are facing a workforce crisis driven by low wages, limited benefits, and the rising cost of care for their own families. Many providers—despite working full time caring for other people's children—struggle to afford quality child care for their own. Senate Bill 664 takes a meaningful and practical step to address this contradiction by prioritizing the children of child care providers for scholarships through the Child Care Scholarship Program.

This bill recognizes a simple truth: we cannot recruit or retain a strong child care workforce if the workers themselves cannot access child care. By establishing a framework that prioritizes providers' children for scholarships, SB 664 directly supports workforce stability, reduces turnover, and strengthens continuity of care for Maryland families.

Importantly, SB 664 does not create a new entitlement or undermine access for other eligible families. Instead, it ensures that the workers who make the child care system function are not left behind by the very programs designed to support working parents. This approach reflects fairness, common sense, and sound public policy.

For child care providers—many of whom are women and people of color—this legislation also advances equity. It acknowledges their dual roles as caregivers and parents, and it affirms that their labor is valued by the State of Maryland.

SEIU Local 500 urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 664 and to continue advancing policies that strengthen both the child care workforce and the families who depend on it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Director of Political & Legislative Affairs
SEIU Local 500