

Chairperson, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong and enthusiastic support for House Bill 0849.

HB0849 takes an important and necessary step to strengthen Maryland's child care system by ensuring that child care workers maintain access to the Child Care Scholarship Program, even during the current and future enrollment freezes. Protecting this access is essential. Early educators are the backbone of the child care system, yet they are among the lowest-paid workers in our economy. When child care professionals cannot access affordable care for their own children, the entire system is placed at risk.

By explicitly prioritizing child care workers on the scholarship waitlist, this bill supports workforce stability at a time when programs across the state are struggling with staffing shortages and classroom closures. Ensuring that those who care for Maryland's youngest children can reliably access scholarships is not only a matter of fairness, it is a practical workforce solution that helps keep classrooms open and parents working.

I previously submitted a letter of information identifying concerns related to exemptions from the scholarship waitlist. Those concerns have been addressed, and I am now fully and enthusiastically supportive of the bill as amended. I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 0849.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Maryland's early educators and working families.

Sincerely,
Molly McGriff
Senior Director, Untied for Childcare

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