



ARCO IRIS

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER

March 9, 2026

Testimony in Support of SB 672

Prince George's County – Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Position: FAVORABLE

Submitted to: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

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Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolina Reyes, and I am an the director and owner of Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center in Laurel. I am an early childhood educator and child care provider serving a diverse group of families in Prince George's County. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 672, which requires the development of an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and child care for children from birth through age three.

High-quality child care is not simply a service for working families, it is the foundation of our entire education system. The earliest years of life are when children's brains develop the fastest. During the birth-to-three stage, children build the emotional, cognitive, and social skills that will support them throughout school and life. If we truly believe in strengthening education, we must invest in the very beginning of the learning journey.

In my center, we serve many families from our community, including working parents who depend on safe, nurturing, and educational environments for their young children. Many of the families we serve work long hours and rely on child care not only so they can work, but so their children can receive strong early learning experiences that prepare them for school success.

However, access to high-quality child care remains a major challenge for families. The current freeze on the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program has made the situation even more difficult. Many families who qualify for assistance cannot access it right now, and providers like us struggle to support families who want to enroll but cannot afford the true cost of care. Without financial support, families are left with very limited options.

Providers are also facing significant challenges. While we want to continue serving our communities and expanding access, the cost of operating a child care program is extremely high. Rent and lease costs continue to rise, making it difficult for centers to sustain their programs. Additionally, the process of licensing, permits, and regulatory requirements can be complex and costly. While these systems are important for safety and quality, providers need support and collaboration from the state and local government to navigate these processes.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to our mission of supporting children and families. We want to grow, serve more children, and continue offering high-quality programs. But we cannot do it alone. That is why planning efforts like the one proposed in SB672 are so important. By studying the true costs, workforce needs, provider capacity, and funding options, Maryland can create a thoughtful plan that expands access while supporting the educators and programs that make early childhood education possible.

Birth to three must not be forgotten. These years are critical, and investing in them benefits not only children and families but also our entire community and future workforce.

I respectfully urge the committee to support SB672 and take an important step toward expanding access to high-quality early childhood education for the youngest children in Prince George's County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carolina Reyes

Owner & Director, Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center