



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive  
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov  
FAX 410-313-3051

February 18, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT** of **Senate Bill 664**: Child Care Scholarship Program – Priority for Child Care Providers

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

Access to affordable and reliable childcare is foundational to a strong workforce and a resilient economy. On behalf of Howard County, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 664 (SB664) and to thank sponsor Senator Harris for advancing legislation that recognizes and supports the childcare professionals who make workforce participation possible for so many Maryland families.

Understanding that the best down payment on ending childhood poverty in Howard County has always been investing in early childhood education and full day pre-k, we expanded full-day pre-k from 300 students in the 2021-2022 school year to 942 in the current 2024-2025 school year, a 200 percent increase. Additionally, we worked with the State to direct an additional \$22 million to renovate the Faulkner Ridge Center, which will create an additional 260 seats of full day pre-k as a regional early childhood education facility.

We also invested \$2 million into the Community Action Council to construct and open a new Early Childhood Education facility along the Route One corridor that will serve our Elkridge, Jessup and North Laurel areas. This investment will result in a 5,000 square foot facility with the capacity to serve nearly 80 children in Howard County. Additionally, he has partnered with the Community Action Council and Howard Community College to invest \$750,000 to the Community Action Council to support the expansion of early childhood education for infants, toddlers, and two-year olds. This funding creates five new childcare classrooms operated by CAC, of which three are located at the Children's Learning Center at HCC and two will be located at Ellicott City Head Start center.

We know that these investments will be maximized only if they are coupled with a strong and supported workforce. SB664 would direct the Maryland State Department of Education to establish a framework that prioritizes the children of child care providers for scholarships through the Child Care Scholarship Program. This policy acknowledges a fundamental reality: the stability of our childcare system depends on the ability of providers themselves to access affordable care for their own families.

Childcare providers are essential workers whose labor enables parents across every sector of our economy to go to work each day. Yet many providers face the same affordability challenges as the families they serve. By prioritizing their children for scholarships, SB664 offers a targeted, practical solution to support recruitment, retention, and long-term sustainability within the childcare workforce.



## HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

3430 Courthouse Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■ 410-313-2013 Voice/Relay

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive  
cball@howardcountymd.gov

www.howardcountymd.gov  
FAX 410-313-3051

In Howard County, we continue to hear from employers, families, and providers alike that access to quality childcare is one of the most significant barriers to workforce participation and economic mobility. Policies that strengthen the childcare workforce directly advance our shared goals of economic competitiveness, equity, and family stability.

SB664 represents a thoughtful and measured approach that leverages existing programs while delivering meaningful support to the workers at the core of our childcare system.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give SB664 a favorable report. Thank you for your continued commitment to Maryland's families and workforce.

Respectfully,

Calvin Ball  
Howard County Executive