



Testimony - HB 1034, Child Care Entities - Child Abuse and Neglect - Training and Reporting Requirements
Favorable
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
April 7, 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 House Bill 1034. Our union represents thousands of working people across Maryland, including child care providers who play a critical role in the safety, development, and well-being of young children and families.

This legislation takes an important and necessary step toward strengthening the safety net that protects our youngest and most vulnerable children. By requiring regular, standardized training on the identification, prevention, and reporting of child abuse and neglect, HB 1034 ensures that those on the frontlines of care are equipped with the tools they need to act swiftly and responsibly.

SEIU Local 500 supports several key improvements included in the bill as amended:

Clear, enforceable training requirements: Providers must complete training within six months of employment and every two years thereafter, while also meeting additional annual instructional requirements tied to licensure and registration. This layered approach reflects the seriousness of the responsibility placed on child care workers.

Recognition of child care providers as mandated reporters: By explicitly including providers within the definition of “educator or human service worker,” the bill reinforces their critical role in safeguarding children and clarifies their legal obligations.

Accountability measures that ensure compliance: The certification requirement and potential penalties for both individual providers and child care entities underscore that these standards are not optional—they are essential.

Accessible training infrastructure: The requirement that the state provide a free online training course removes barriers to compliance and ensures equitable access across the workforce.

Our members know better than anyone that child care workers are often the first line of defense in identifying abuse or neglect. They build trusting relationships with children and families, and they are uniquely positioned to notice when something is wrong. But with that responsibility must come meaningful support, clear expectations, and consistent training.

HB 1034 moves Maryland closer to a system where every child care provider—regardless of setting—has the knowledge and confidence to act when it matters most.

At the same time, we emphasize that implementation must be done in a way that supports—not punishes—the workforce. Many child care providers are already underpaid and overburdened. As the state strengthens requirements, it must also remain committed to investing in this workforce through adequate funding, paid training time, and technical assistance.

In closing, SEIU Local 500 urges a favorable report on House Bill 1034. Protecting children and supporting the workers who care for them are not competing priorities—they are one and the same.

Thank you for your time and consideration.