



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

Maryland State Child Care Association

2810 Carrollton Road
Annapolis, Md. 21403
Phone: (410) 820-9196
Email: info@mscca.org
www.mscca.org

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over five thousand members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

Support Testimony Senate Bill 359 – Child Care Facilities – Criminal History Records Check Requirement Submitted to: Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Date: February 18, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland State Child Care Association strongly supports SB 359. This bill strengthens protections for children in Maryland's child care facilities by ensuring that all individuals with direct contact with children are subject to thorough criminal history records checks. The bill also complies with the recommendations based on the independent audit of MSDE licensing procedures captured in the recent OPEGA report. [Evaluation of the Division of Early Childhood](#)
Our child care workforce is dedicated and professional, but the safety of children must always be the highest priority. SB 359 achieves this goal while creating a clear and consistent process while improving efficiency and effectiveness for compliance:

Key Provisions We Support:

1. Mandatory Criminal History Checks

- Individuals who will have direct contact with children in child care facilities must undergo criminal history records checks before employment, ensuring that children are protected from potential harm.

2. Centralized Management Unit

- The State Department of Education will establish a centralized unit to process and manage criminal history check information. This reduces administrative burdens for child care providers and ensures consistent, efficient handling of sensitive records. The centralization will expedite hiring and improve delays associated with onboarding staff.

3. Probationary Employment Qualifications Adjusted

- First-time child care teachers in certain centers will have clarified probationary employment requirements, balancing the need for safety with practical workforce considerations.

4. Flexibility in Oversight

- The bill removes outdated limits on the number of Deputy State Superintendents the State Superintendent can appoint, allowing for more effective supervision and oversight of the child care system.

Why This Matters

Maryland's families deserve the assurance that child care providers meet the highest safety standards. SB 359 not only protects children but also supports providers by streamlining procedures and clarifying qualifications for staff. By centralizing criminal history management, the bill helps providers focus on quality care and early learning, rather than administrative compliance challenges.

We urge a favorable report on SB 359 to ensure Maryland's child care system is safe, professional, and well-supported.