



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

Maryland State Child Care Association

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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 5500 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.

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 664

Child Care Scholarship Program – Priority for Child Care Providers

Submitted to: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

March 4, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is in strong support of Senate Bill 664 which takes a critical and timely step to stabilize Maryland's child care system by requiring the Maryland State Department of Education to establish a framework that prioritizes children of child care providers for scholarships under the Child Care Scholarship Program for applications received after July 1, 2026.

This policy recognizes a fundamental truth: **child care is the workforce behind the workforce**, and without supporting those who provide care, Maryland's broader economy cannot function.

Why SB 664 Is Necessary

The child care workforce in Maryland is **severely underpaid despite high qualifications**, making access to affordable child care essential for workforce stability. According to the Maryland Family Network Demographics Report (2025), the average annual wages in the child care sector are:

- \$17,854 for child care aide
- \$26,877 for lead teachers in child care centers
- \$31,040 for family child care providers
- \$41,131 for child care center directors

The Maryland Comptroller's 2024 State of the Economy report confirms that **qualifications required in the child care field exceed the wages paid**, leaving many child care professionals struggling to meet basic family needs.

As a result, **many members of the child care workforce already qualify for child care scholarship benefits**, yet their children are not prioritized on the current waitlist. This creates a contradiction that undermines workforce participation and retention.

Impact on Families, Employers, and the Economy

Parents cannot go to work without child care, and **child care programs cannot operate without a stable workforce**. Prioritizing the children of child care providers for scholarships strengthens:

- Workforce participation for parents across all industries
- Stability and retention within the child care sector
- Economic productivity statewide

As noted in the submitted testimony, **excluding or failing to prioritize the child care workforce harms children, families, the child care industry, and Maryland's economy**.

Current Crisis: Waitlists and Workforce Shortages

Maryland's child care system is already under severe strain. The ongoing child care scholarship freeze has resulted in **more than 5,100 families waiting for child care assistance**, while workforce shortages continue to plague the field both in Maryland and nationally.

At the same time, child care businesses operate on an unsustainable financial model. Most revenue is consumed by staffing costs, leaving **less than 1% of revenue** to keep small child care businesses open—**surviving but not thriving**. Providers simply cannot afford to offer free or discounted child care to their own employees.

SB 664 Is a Practical, Targeted Solution

While other states such as Kentucky have implemented comprehensive models that guarantee child care subsidies to the workforce regardless of income, Maryland's current budget constraints limit broader reforms.

SB 664 offers a **measured, fiscally responsible approach** by prioritizing access within the existing Child Care Scholarship Program, ensuring that those who care for Maryland's children can continue to do so.

Conclusion

Child care is not a peripheral issue—it is an **economic and equity imperative**. Senate Bill 664 recognizes the indispensable role of child care providers and takes a necessary step to support the workforce that makes all other work possible.

For these reasons, MSCCA respectfully urges a **Favorable Report on SB 664** and help strengthen Maryland's families, workforce, and economy.