



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland State Senate
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: SB 672 - Prince George's County - Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 672, legislation that intends to give families more flexibility by expanding high-quality access to early childhood education and child care in Prince George's County for children from birth through three years.

Infants and toddlers are excluded from education and care services. Currently, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has early childhood learning programs exclusively for children 4-5 years old. The programs offered by the Department of Parks and Recreation strive to meet the childcare needs of families in Prince George's County with recreational and affordable programs, yet most programs are for children ages 5-12, and the preschool program is for children 3-5. This age minimum requirement makes it difficult for parents with younger children to find care and learning opportunities for their infants or toddlers.

Additionally, Maryland has experienced sharp declines in child care providers while being one of the most expensive states for infant and toddler care. The number of child care providers in Prince George's County fell 18.03% between Jan. 1, 2020, and Jan. 1, 2024. Availability is especially tight for families seeking care for children under 2 since Maryland regulations require that child care centers have one adult employee for every three children under the age of 2, and many providers are no longer taking infants or toddlers.

According to the Prince George's County Child Care Demographics 2024 Report, the average child care costs for infants are \$13,196 and \$12,744 for preschoolers (2-4 years old). According

to data collected by Child Care Aware, center-based infant care is the costliest type of child care in Maryland, with an average annual cost to families of \$19,906.

When there is limited access to early childhood education and child care resources, families have to dedicate more time to take care of their younger children and aren't able to reenter the workforce or contribute to their household earnings. Parents staying in the labor force allows for businesses to avoid inefficiencies and costs associated with turnover and vacancies.

SB672 will require the Department of Education to consult with Prince George's County and relevant State agencies and develop an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and childcare in the county. This plan would include an analysis of the cost to parents, the county, and the State, the workforce needs of providers to expand access, the capacity of these providers to serve more children, and additional county and State revenue options.

SB672 does not require a specific provider(s) of early childhood education and child care. It also does not remove or change existing programs for children older than three years old. Instead, the bill would help reduce care deserts in the county, increase labor force participation rates, address affordability concerns, and ensure that an age group is not excluded from learning and development opportunities.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 672.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alonzo T. Washington', with a stylized, flowing script.

Alonzo T. Washington
Maryland State Senator
District 22