

Chairperson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 1321.

House Bill 1321 makes adjustments to Maryland's Child Care Scholarship Program (CCS) by restoring modest parent copayments, capped at 7 percent of family income. This level aligns with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recommended affordability threshold and strikes the right balance between family contribution and public investment.

Returning modest copays is a responsible step that allows the state to serve more families with existing resources. By improving the sustainability of the scholarship program, HB1321 will help reduce the current waitlist and expand access to child care assistance for families who need it most. When parents can access affordable, reliable child care, they are better able to work, pursue education, and contribute to Maryland's economy.

Importantly, this bill supports the long-term stability of the child care system by ensuring that limited public funds are stretched as effectively as possible. The scholarship program is a critical workforce support for families across the state, and HB1321 helps ensure that it can continue to meet demand while maintaining affordability for low-income households.

I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1321. This bill represents a practical, data-informed approach to strengthening Maryland's child care system, supporting working families, and promoting economic stability statewide.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on issues affecting Maryland's children and working families.

Sincerely,
Molly McGriff
Senior Director, Untied for Childcare

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