

pdf SB 672 MSCCA testimony EEE March 11.pdf

Uploaded by: Christina Peusch

Position: FAV



**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.

Senate Bill 672-Prince George's County – Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Submitted to: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 11, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

MSCCA is in support of **Senate Bill 672**, legislation that requires the State Department of Education to develop an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and child care in Prince George's County for children from birth through age three.

This bill takes a thoughtful, data-driven approach to meeting the needs of families, child care providers, and the broader community by ensuring that any expansion of services is carefully planned, fiscally responsible, and developed in collaboration with key partners. Care for children from birth to age three is the hardest to find and the most expensive due to strict staff-to-child ratios and COMAR requirements for infants and toddlers. Although child care is essential infrastructure, it remains largely unaffordable: families spend, on average, about 27 percent of their income on care, while child care businesses struggle to pay wages high enough to recruit and retain staff. The average child care worker earns less than \$27,000 annually. According to the Maryland Family Network's 2025 Child Care Demographics, the average annual cost of infant and toddler care is \$23,735 in Prince George's County and \$24,657 statewide, and there are more than 207,000 children ages 0–2 across Maryland. These sobering numbers reflect a clear market failure and underscore the urgent need to build a stronger, more sustainable child care system that allows parents to work and contribute to the economy.

Senate Bill 672 directs the State Department of Education to consult with Prince George's County and relevant State agencies in developing the required plan. This collaborative requirement recognizes that expanding early childhood education and child care is a shared responsibility and that successful outcomes depend on coordination across levels of government. By requiring consultation, the bill helps ensure that local conditions, existing resources, and community needs are meaningfully considered in the planning process.

The bill requires the implementation and financing plan to include a comprehensive analysis of key factors that affect access to early childhood education and child care. Specifically, the plan must examine costs to parents, the county, and the State; workforce needs; provider capacity; and potential county and State revenue options. This structured analysis promotes transparency and accountability while allowing policymakers to make informed decisions based on a clear understanding of financial impacts, workforce considerations, and service capacity. Rather than mandating immediate changes without sufficient information, Senate Bill 672 ensures that future actions will be grounded in careful evaluation and planning.

Senate Bill 672 includes a clear timeline for accountability by requiring the Department to submit the completed plan to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Prince George's County Delegation by December 1, 2026. This reporting requirement ensures legislative oversight and provides policymakers with the information needed to consider next steps.

Senate Bill 672 represents a prudent and forward-looking approach to expanding access to high-quality early childhood education and child care in Prince George's County. By focusing on planning, collaboration, and comprehensive analysis, this legislation lays the groundwork for sustainable and equitable improvements that benefit children, families, providers, and the community.

MSCCA respectfully urges a **FAVORABLE** report on **Senate Bill 672**.

sb672 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deborah Williams

Position: FAV

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March 9, 2026

Testimony in Support of SB 672

Prince George's County – Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Position: FAVORABLE

Submitted to: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Deborah A. Williams, and I am the Director of Jaycees Early Learning Center in Fort Washington, Md. I have been a childcare provider for over 25 years. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 672, which requires the development of an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and childcare for children from birth through age three.

Early Childhood Education is a very important part or should I say the beginning of a child's education. Many parents cannot enroll their child or children in Early childhood programs because of the cost however they do realize the need for early education. Many of my families are struggling to pay tuition, rent and other expenses. However, access to high-quality child care remains a major challenge for families. The current freeze on the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program has made the situation even more difficult. Many families who qualify for assistance cannot access it right now, and providers like us struggle to support families who want to enroll but cannot afford the true cost of care. Without financial support, families are left with very limited options. Providers are also facing significant challenges. While we want to continue serving our communities and expanding access, the cost of operating a child care program is extremely high.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to our mission of supporting children and families. We want to grow, serve more children, and continue offering high-quality programs. But we cannot do it alone. That is why planning efforts like the one proposed in SB672 are so important. By studying the true costs, workforce needs, provider capacity, and funding options, Maryland can create a thoughtful plan that expands access while supporting the educators and programs that make early childhood education possible. Birth to three must not be forgotten. These years are critical, and investing in them benefits not only children and families but also our entire community and future workforce.

I respectfully urge the committee to support SB672 and take an important step toward expanding access to high-quality early childhood education for the youngest children in Prince George's County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Williams

Deborah A. Williams

Director

SB672 Public Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Lien Hoang

Position: FAV

ALONZO T. WASHINGTON
Legislative District 22
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Finance Committee



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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', written in a cursive style.

Alonzo T. Washington
Maryland State Senator
District 22

Testimony SB672.pdf

Uploaded by: Paulette Munford

Position: FAV



Rising Generations

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

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Lanham, Maryland 20706

March 9, 2026

Testimony in **Favorable** Support for SB 672

Prince George's County – Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

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

Greetings Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my testimony in support of SB672.

My name is Paulette Munford. I am the owner/operator of 2 early learning centers in Prince Georges County. It has been a pleasure to serve hundreds of children and families for over 30 years. It has always been our goal and commitment to provide quality care and educational experiences for the children. Studies have proven that the age 0 – 5 years are the most formative years for children. Therefore, it is vitally important that All children are provided an opportunity to enroll in high quality programs.

The current freeze on scholarship funding has created challenges for families as well as licensed programs. Some families have had to resort to unlicensed care which compromises the safety and welfare of our children. Our licensed programs are suffering because many families cannot afford to place their children in care without any assistance with tuition costs. We continue to operate our

programs despite the challenges because we are committed to the children who remain in our care and continue to hope for those children who need our care.

Supporting SB672, which states that its purpose is, ' for requiring the State Department of Education to develop an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and child care in Prince George's County for children from birth through 3 years; requiring the Department to consult with certain entities; requiring the plan to include certain analyses; and generally relating to early childhood education and child care in Prince George's County', will definitely increase the opportunity for more children and families to have access to high quality programs.

Therefore, I fully support the passing of SB672. Please consider the impact you will make by supporting a bill to expand access to high quality early childhood education programs for children 0 – 3 years. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paulette Munford

SB672 - Testimony Prince George's County Access 3-

Uploaded by: Rebecca Hancock

Position: FAV



Testimony Concerning SB672 – Prince George’s County Expanding
Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

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

March 11, 2026

Position: Support

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a non-profit association advocating on behalf of registered early childhood educators in Maryland. These small businesses are a vital part of the child care delivery and the early education system in Maryland. Family child care offers a unique learning environment, flexible enough to meet each child’s needs individually and the special relationships formed by children of various ages in family child care enhances the learning experience for all.

Young children between birth to age 5 learn at a speed unmatched the rest of his or her life! It is during these years – when more than 85 percent of a child’s brain is formed – that crucial brain connections are created. These connections help develop indispensable academic, social and cognitive skills, which are the basis for learning. (*The Children’s Reading Foundation*). It is imperative that children at this age are exposed to and have access to high quality child care to continue and enhance their cognitive, physical and emotional well-being.

I would also recommend not only consulting Prince George’s County School System and other state entities but to also engage and collaborate with family child care providers who have day-to-day interactions with the children in their care.

MSFCCA has been a consistent leader in early care and education policy and giving SB672 a favorable vote will help Prince George’s County families have access to high-quality child care for our youngest citizens to better enhance their early education experiences.

MSFCCA appreciates the opportunity to comment on this legislation and welcomes any questions or comments. Feel free to contact Rebecca Hancock, the MSFCCA Vice President of Public Policy at (240) 299-0222 (cell), (301) 934-4445 (home), or kaysplayhousechildcare@gmail.com to answer any questions concerning this testimony.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Hancock
Vice-President
Public Policy
Maryland Stat Family Child Association

LCAM-Testimony SB 672.pdf

Uploaded by: Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl

Position: FAV

March 9, 2026



Testimony in Support of SB 672

Prince George's County – Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Position: FAVORABLE

Submitted to: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl**, and I serve as the **Senior Director of the Latino Child Care Association of Maryland (LCAM)**. Our organization represents a **large and diverse network of Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers across the state of Maryland**, including many providers serving families in Prince George's County. I am honored to submit this testimony in **strong support of Senate Bill 672**, which calls for the development of an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and child care for children from birth through age three.

High-quality child care is the foundation of a strong and equitable education system. The earliest years of life—birth to age three—are the most critical for brain development. During this period, children build the emotional, cognitive, and social skills that shape their long-term success in school and in life. If Maryland is committed to improving educational outcomes and strengthening its future workforce, investment must begin at the very start of a child's learning journey. Across our LCAM network, providers serve thousands of families who rely on safe, nurturing, and educational environments for their infants and toddlers. Many parents work long or nontraditional hours and depend on child care not only to maintain employment, but to ensure their children receive early learning experiences that prepare them for school readiness.

However, access to high-quality care remains a significant challenge. The current freeze on the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program has made the situation even more difficult. Families who qualify for assistance cannot access it, and providers struggle to support parents who want to enroll but cannot afford the true cost of care. Without financial support, families are left with limited options.

Providers themselves face substantial barriers. Operating a child care program—whether a Family Child Care Home or a Center—has become increasingly expensive. Rising rent, insurance, materials, and staffing costs make it difficult for programs to remain sustainable. Additionally, navigating licensing, permitting, and regulatory requirements can be complex and costly. While these systems are essential for ensuring safety and quality, providers need stronger collaboration and support from state and local agencies to successfully meet these requirements.

Despite these challenges, LCAM providers remain deeply committed to serving children and families. They want to expand, improve their facilities, and increase capacity—but they cannot do it alone. The planning process outlined in SB 672 is essential. By examining the true cost of care, workforce needs, provider capacity, and long-term funding strategies, Maryland can build a thoughtful and sustainable plan to expand access for its youngest learners.

Children from birth to age three must not be overlooked. Investing in these early years strengthens families, communities, and Maryland's future workforce.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support SB 672 and take a meaningful step toward expanding access to high-quality early childhood education for the youngest children in Prince George's County and across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl Senior Director Latino Child Care Association of Maryland (LCAM)

SB 672 Writing Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Ruth Carolina Reyes

Position: FAV



ARCO IRIS

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER

March 9, 2026

Testimony in Support of SB 672

Prince George's County – Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Position: FAVORABLE

Submitted to: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Ruth Carolina Reyes

Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

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Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolina Reyes, and I am an the director and owner of Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center in Laurel. I am an early childhood educator and child care provider serving a diverse group of families in Prince George's County. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 672, which requires the development of an implementation and financing plan to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and child care for children from birth through age three.

High-quality child care is not simply a service for working families, it is the foundation of our entire education system. The earliest years of life are when children's brains develop the fastest. During the birth-to-three stage, children build the emotional, cognitive, and social skills that will support them throughout school and life. If we truly believe in strengthening education, we must invest in the very beginning of the learning journey.

In my center, we serve many families from our community, including working parents who depend on safe, nurturing, and educational environments for their young children. Many of the families we serve work long hours and rely on child care not only so they can work, but so their children can receive strong early learning experiences that prepare them for school success.

However, access to high-quality child care remains a major challenge for families. The current freeze on the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program has made the situation even more difficult. Many families who qualify for assistance cannot access it right now, and providers like us struggle to support families who want to enroll but cannot afford the true cost of care. Without financial support, families are left with very limited options.

Providers are also facing significant challenges. While we want to continue serving our communities and expanding access, the cost of operating a child care program is extremely high. Rent and lease costs continue to rise, making it difficult for centers to sustain their programs. Additionally, the process of licensing, permits, and regulatory requirements can be complex and costly. While these systems are important for safety and quality, providers need support and collaboration from the state and local government to navigate these processes.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to our mission of supporting children and families. We want to grow, serve more children, and continue offering high-quality programs. But we cannot do it alone. That is why planning efforts like the one proposed in SB672 are so important. By studying the true costs, workforce needs, provider capacity, and funding options, Maryland can create a thoughtful plan that expands access while supporting the educators and programs that make early childhood education possible.

Birth to three must not be forgotten. These years are critical, and investing in them benefits not only children and families but also our entire community and future workforce.

I respectfully urge the committee to support SB672 and take an important step toward expanding access to high-quality early childhood education for the youngest children in Prince George's County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carolina Reyes

Owner & Director, Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

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Uploaded by: Tanisha Wooten

Position: FAV

Supporting Statement for SB0672

Supporting Statement for SB0672

Author: Tanisha Wooten

As a parent advocate in Prince George's County, I strongly support SB0672, Prince George's County - Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education and Child Care. This legislation represents a critical investment in our children, our families, and the long-term stability of our community.

Far too many families in Prince George's County struggle to access affordable, high-quality early childhood education and child care. These barriers disproportionately impact working families, single parents, and children with specialized needs. SB0672 directly addresses these inequities by expanding access, strengthening program capacity, and ensuring that more children enter kindergarten prepared to learn and thrive.

Research consistently shows that early childhood education is one of the most powerful tools we have to close opportunity gaps. When children receive strong early learning experiences, they are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. SB0672 recognizes this reality and ensures that Prince George's County is not left behind in providing these essential supports.

This bill also strengthens families. Access to reliable child care allows parents to work, pursue education, and maintain financial stability. When families are supported, our entire county benefits-from stronger workforce participation to reduced long-term social service costs.

Senator Washington's leadership on this issue reflects a deep understanding of the needs of our community. SB0672 is a forward-thinking, family-centered bill that prioritizes children's development and parental stability.

I urge the General Assembly to pass SB0672 and ensure that every child in Prince George's County has access to the early learning opportunities they deserve.

Author: Tanisha Wooten