

Delegate Mireku-North Senate Testimony in Support

Uploaded by: Bernice Mireku-North

Position: FAV

BERNICE MIREKU-NORTH, ESQ.
Legislative District 14
Montgomery County

Ways and Means Committee

Chair

Child Care Subcommittee

Early Childhood and
Special Education Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 748: Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early
Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - Repeal of Deadlines**
March 25th, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment. I come before you today to offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 748: Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - Repeal of Deadlines**. This bill updates and clarifies the timelines for when early childhood educators in private prekindergarten programs must meet career ladder qualification requirements established under [2024's House Bill 1441](#). HB748 makes permanent the successful career ladder framework for private providers delivering publicly funded prekindergarten and updates the implementation timelines in a thoughtful and practical way.

Under this bill as amended, early childhood teaching assistants must meet required qualifications within three months of hire, and prekindergarten lead teachers must complete requirements within six months of qualifying for that role. These timelines are reasonable and achievable, while maintaining the high standards for quality and educational attainment.

Importantly, HB748 does not lower or eliminate qualifications. Educators are still required to earn the appropriate credentials and degrees. This bill simply ensures that those requirements are tied to career progression rather than fixed calendar dates, creating a more sustainable implementation framework for private providers delivering publicly funded prekindergarten.

Maryland's early education workforce is essential to families and to children's long-term academic success. Private providers operate with different staffing structures than traditional

public school systems, and flexibility in timing helps them recruit and retain passionate educators who are committed to growing into their roles.

A more flexible timeline also supports recruitment and retention. Providers can hire passionate, committed educators who are actively working toward their credentials, rather than turning away promising candidates who may need additional time to complete formal degree requirements. This is especially important for experienced educators and individuals from diverse backgrounds who may face barriers to accelerated credentialing but bring invaluable cultural competence and lived experience to the classroom.

Most importantly, children benefit from a stable, qualified, and supported early childhood workforce. By reducing turnover and supporting classroom continuity, HB 748 strengthens outcomes for young learners while preserving quality standards. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 748.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernice Mireku-North". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honorable Bernice Mireku-North, Esq.
Delegate. Maryland Legislative District 14
Maryland House of Delegates

Senate hearing on MSCCA testimony support HB 748 M

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.

Testimony: HB 748: Publicly Funded Prekindergarten-Early Childhood Career Ladder for Private Providers-New Pathways

Submitted to: Education, Energy and Environment Committee

March 25, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

MSCCA is in strong support of HB 748 -"Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers – Repeal of Deadlines New Pathways", which makes permanent the current and successful career ladder.

This bill addresses a critical need in Maryland's early childhood education system by repealing deadlines for educators to meet experiential and educational qualifications. Instead, it introduces flexible pathways that allow educators to achieve these qualifications within reasonable periods after being hired. This approach recognizes the realities faced by private providers and educators, ensuring that talented individuals are not excluded due to arbitrary timelines.

Key Benefits:

- **Elevating the Profession:** The career ladder is designed to transform early childhood education teaching into a high-status profession while retaining high-quality teachers who gain additional responsibility, authority, status, and compensation as they advance.
- **Flexibility and Opportunity:** By allowing educators to meet qualifications within set periods after hiring, the bill supports workforce development, competency-based equivalencies, and encourages more individuals to enter and remain in the profession. This flexibility is especially important for private providers who often face staffing challenges.
- **Compensation and Professional Growth:** The bill ensures that early childhood educators are adequately compensated for their work and provides opportunities for professional development and advancement. As educators move up the career ladder, their compensation increases, reflecting their growing expertise and contributions.
- **Multiple Pathways:** The bill recognizes diverse backgrounds and experiences, allowing educators to qualify through education, experience, or a combination of both. For example, teaching assistants can qualify by earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or holding an associate degree, or

15 years of experience, while lead teachers can qualify through degrees with alternative, competency-based extensive experience, and additional requirements for professional assessment to ensure quality.

Why Support This Bill?

Maryland's commitment to high-quality early childhood education depends on a strong, diverse, and well-supported workforce. This bill makes permanent the successful career ladder, removes unnecessary barriers, promotes equity, and empowers educators to grow within their roles. It is a practical, forward-thinking solution that will help ensure every child in Maryland has access to excellent prekindergarten education.

MSCCA urges the committee to support HB 748 and continue to build an equitable career ladder with competency-based alternative pathways paving the way for a bright future for Maryland's children and educators in a true mixed delivery system.

SEIU Local 500 - Testimony in Support of HB 748 -

Uploaded by: Elly Colmers

Position: FAV



Testimony - HB 748,
Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private
Providers - New Pathways
Favorable
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 25, 2026
Elly Cowan on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairman Feldman & Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents thousands of education professionals across Maryland, including early childhood educators who are on the front lines of preparing our youngest learners for success. We strongly support the intent of Maryland’s early childhood educator career ladder — to transform early childhood education into a high-status profession, attract talented educators, and retain high-quality teachers through meaningful compensation and advancement opportunities.

House Bill 748 takes an important and pragmatic step toward making that vision sustainable.

This legislation strengthens Maryland’s early childhood educator career ladder by creating more realistic and accessible pathways for educators working in private prekindergarten settings. By replacing rigid, one-size-fits-all deadlines with flexible timelines tied to when an educator is hired or promoted, HB 748 recognizes the real-life circumstances of working adults—many of whom are balancing jobs, family responsibilities, and continuing education.

Importantly, the bill allows educators to gain necessary credentials—such as a Child Development Associate (CDA) or an associate degree—within a reasonable period after entering the profession, rather than requiring them upfront or by arbitrary deadlines.

This approach removes unnecessary barriers to entry while still maintaining high standards for quality and professional growth.

HB 748 also appropriately values experience. By preserving pathways for long-time early childhood educators to advance based on years of service, the bill ensures that dedicated workers are not pushed out of the profession due to shifting credential requirements. At the same time, it pairs these pathways with expectations for continued professional development and mentoring, strengthening the overall quality of instruction.

For SEIU members, this bill is about more than policy—it is about workforce stability. Maryland is investing heavily in expanding access to prekindergarten, but that expansion cannot succeed without a strong, supported workforce. If requirements are too rigid or unrealistic, providers will struggle to hire and retain staff, and families will ultimately bear the consequences through reduced access or program instability.

HB 748 strikes the right balance between maintaining high standards and creating achievable pathways for educators to enter and advance in the field. It supports recruitment, improves retention, and respects the professionalism of early childhood educators.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 urges a favorable report on House Bill 748.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Senate side_ COA_ written testimony_ HB 748 Publicly

Uploaded by: Laura Jahromi

Position: FAV



March 23, 2026

Testimony in Support of House Bill 748 – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder 2 for Private Providers – Repeal of Deadlines

We respectfully urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to make a favorable report on HB 748 – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers – Repeal of Deadlines as we believe it will ensure the original intent of the legislation is honored and issues in implementation have been addressed.

Early Childhood Educator career ladders establish a professional pathway that values experience, supports growth, and enhances quality across settings. While Maryland currently lacks a comprehensive birth to five career ladder, ensuring that our career ladder within Prekindergarten settings functions as it should is a good first step in moving towards a more comprehensive system.

When the Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed, there was very little available data about the current early childhood workforce and the level of education and credentials held. As communities, including Montgomery County, have begun implementation over these past few years, it's become increasingly clear that we do not have sufficient educators who possess the stringent qualifications as originally prescribed, thus making it difficult to meet goals to expand Pre-k through a mixed delivery system. We appreciate the State's willingness to make adjustments to the Blueprint plan as implementation has surfaced issues that need to be addressed. We believe these changes will give programs more flexibility to meet requirements without facing punitive timelines AND without sacrificing program quality.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jahromi".

Laura Jahromi, Manager, Strategic Initiatives
The Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance
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The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](https://www.mocochildren.org) is a locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

HB0748 - State Board & MSDE - 3.25.26.docx.pdf

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Position: FAV

TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 748 - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers - New Pathways

DATE: March 25, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and State Department of Education (MSDE) extends their support for House Bill (HB) 748 - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten - Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers – New Pathways which removes certain deadline requirements in the Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder and sets new timelines for staff to meet required qualifications after being hired.

House Bill 748 provides important flexibility within the Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for eligible private prekindergarten providers by replacing fixed statutory deadlines with reasonable, employment-based timelines. Specifically, with the proposed amendments from the sponsor, the bill allows early childhood teaching assistants to obtain required credentials within 3 months of hire and lead teachers qualifying through the experiential pathway to earn an associate degree within 6 months of qualification.

The transition to the 3-month and 6-month timelines reflects a practical and equitable approach to workforce development and reflects reasonable timeframes for providers to meet educational requirements. These modifications maintain high standards while recognizing the realities of recruitment, retention, and timeframes associated with attaining and receiving documentation of educational qualifications. Importantly, the bill preserves accountability through required credential attainment and mentoring structures while strengthening the long-term stability of Maryland’s mixed-delivery prekindergarten system. By expanding access points into the profession while maintaining high standards for instructional quality, it creates a more sustainable pipeline for educators to enter, remain, and grow within the field. MSDE Division of Early Childhood is in full support of HB 748 as amended.

The State Board and MSDE request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates HB 748. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at 443-571-5461 or Laurel.Cratsley@maryland.gov.