



March 9, 2026

Opposition to Senate Bill 886 – Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment – Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage

To the Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Diana E. Mellott, and I am the CEO/COO of Play Centers, Inc. / Play and Learn, a small not-for-profit corporation that operates in Maryland, with 16 School Age and 3 Preschool locations in Baltimore County, and 1 Preschool location in Anne Arundel County, a stone’s throw from the State House. We have operated since September 1982 – fully not for profit, with the majority of the income through parent paid tuition, and also with critical support for families from the Maryland State Child Care Scholarship (which supports current families but which is frozen for the majority of incoming families). We currently employ 177 people. I am writing in opposition to SB 886.

I understand the intent of this bill is to raise worker earnings, and I care deeply about my employees. But this proposal would create economic consequences many businesses like mine simply cannot absorb - threatening jobs, increasing costs, and undermining stability.

Raising the minimum wage to \$25 per hour by 2030 – a 67% increase – is not a small adjustment. For our business, that would mean:

An estimated annual payroll increase of approximately \$2,208,960 in year 1.

Pressure to raise prices for our customers. In fact, the families we serve would NOT have funds sufficient to pay the required increases.

While some Maryland companies would be faced with difficult decisions about staffing levels, hours, or expansion, we would nearly immediately have to close all of our child care centers, that currently serve nearly 1,000 of Maryland’s infants through school-aged children, destroying a critical component of the work force behind the work force.

This would not only affect entry-level positions. It would impact wages across our entire team due to compression.

What concerns me most is placing this policy into the Maryland Constitution. Embedding it there would effectively lock in sweeping economic mandates with little ability to correct course if the consequences prove damaging. That level of permanence is risky for employers, workers and communities alike.

I am not opposed to fair wages. I am legitimately concerned that our private, not-for-profit company - which has provided affordable child care to thousands and thousands of families since 1982, will have no other choice but to cease operations in all locations.

There has to be a solution that facilitates fair wages, which not putting Maryland small businesses OUT of business and adding to the burden on the State. I respectfully ask you to *oppose* SB 886.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Diana E. Mellott
CEO/COO
Play Centers, Inc.
Parkville, Towson, Hunt Valley, Dundalk, Annapolis, Essex, Phoenix, Timonium, Cockeysville, Baldwin,

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