

Good afternoon Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Matthew Coster, and I am the President of Baltimore Firefighters IAFF Local 734, representing the professional firefighters and paramedics who serve the City of Baltimore.

I am here today to express strong support for House Bill 1245, which establishes the Baltimore First Responders Child Care Support and Accessibility Program.

Firefighters and paramedics work demanding and unpredictable schedules. Our members routinely work 24-hour shifts, overnight hours, weekends, and holidays to ensure emergency services are available around the clock. While this schedule is essential for public safety, it creates significant challenges for members who are raising families. Most traditional child care options are built around a typical 9-to-5 schedule. That simply doesn't work for many first responders who may report to work early in the morning, work overnight, or be called in during emergencies.

Because of this, many of our members are forced to rely on complicated and expensive child care arrangements just to be able to come to work and serve their communities.

This bill helps address that problem by providing child care support to first responders, allowing them to access quality care that aligns with the realities of public safety careers.

Supporting first responders in this way is not just a family issue—it is also a public safety issue. Reliable child care improves attendance, reduces stress, and helps departments recruit and retain the dedicated professionals our communities depend on.

On behalf of the members of Baltimore Firefighters IAFF Local 734, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1245.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Matthew Coster, President

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