



Testimony - HB 1034, Child Care Entities - Child Abuse and Neglect - Training and Reporting Requirements
Favorable
House Ways & Means Committee
March 4, 2026
Elly Cowan on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairwoman Wilkins & Members of the House Ways & Means Committee:

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports House Bill 1034. Our union represents thousands of working people across Maryland, including child care providers who play a critical role in the safety, development, and well-being of young children and families.

Child care providers are often the first trusted adults outside a child's home to recognize signs of abuse or neglect. HB 1034 appropriately acknowledges this responsibility by ensuring providers receive consistent, recurring training on the identification, prevention, and reporting of child abuse. Standardizing this training every two years helps protect children while reinforcing best practices across the child care system.

Importantly, HB 1034 strengthens child safety without placing unnecessary financial burdens on workers. The bill relies on a free, online training course provided by the State, which is essential for a workforce that is overwhelmingly low-paid and already stretched thin. SEIU Local 500 appreciates that the General Assembly recognizes that safeguarding children should not come at the expense of child care workers' livelihoods.

SEIU Local 500 also supports the bill's clarification that child care providers are included as mandated reporters under Maryland law. This alignment ensures providers are clearly informed of their responsibilities and protected by consistent standards across professions. When expectations are clear and training is accessible, providers are better equipped to act in the best interest of children while protecting themselves professionally.

We urge the Committee to continue working with labor representatives and child care stakeholders as this bill moves forward to ensure implementation is fair, supportive, and focused on education and compliance—not punishment. With the right approach, HB 1034 can strengthen child safety while respecting and supporting the dedicated workforce that Maryland families rely on every day.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1034.

Thank you for your time and consideration.