



March 23, 2026

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 503 – Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program - Funding

We respectfully urge the Ways and Means Committee to make a favorable report on SB 503.

Family Child Care homes are an essential component of Maryland's child care system. They provide flexible, culturally responsive, and neighborhood-based care that is critical for working families, particularly those with infants and toddlers and those working nontraditional hours. It is critical that Maryland invest in strategies that expand and sustain Family Child Care supply.

SB 503 requires the State to include funding for the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program, which supports the recruitment, start-up, and expansion of Family Child Care providers across Maryland. Family Child Care matters because it is one of the fastest and most effective ways to increase child care supply. Providers operate in residential settings where center-based care cannot easily expand, especially in child care deserts and high-cost communities. Without targeted investment, the number of Family Child Care providers continues to decline, reducing access for families and limiting the state's ability to meet demand.

At the same time, Maryland families continue to face significant barriers to accessing child care. State programs such as the Child Care Scholarship are designed to help families afford care, yet access remains constrained by limited supply and provider capacity. Montgomery County's recent Supply and Demand¹ study showed that there are only enough licensed child care seats to serve 19% of the children under two living in the County. We need more seats for infants and toddlers, and expanding family child care is a proven way to do this.

Investing in Family Child Care through SB 503 will:

- Increase child care supply, particularly for infants and toddlers
- Support small business ownership and entrepreneurship
- Expand care in underserved and hard-to-reach communities
- Strengthen the mixed delivery system as Maryland expands Pre-K
- Improve access for families participating in the workforce

Without sustained funding, Maryland cannot rebuild and grow its Family Child Care sector. Family Child Care homes are not a secondary option – they are foundational infrastructure for families and the workforce behind the workforce.

Please support SB 503 to ensure Maryland invests in expanding Family Child Care opportunities and strengthening access for families across the state.

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The Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts all young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

¹ Reinvestment Fund, *The State of Supply and Demand for Childcare in Montgomery County, Maryland* (December 2024), https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/StateSupplyDemand_final_January2025.pdf

