



A Union of Professionals
AFT-Maryland

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**Written Testimony to the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
HB 1245 - Baltimore First Responders Child Care Support and
Accessibility Program – Establishment
March 11, 2026**

FAVORABLE

Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee: AFT Maryland asks for a favorable report on HB 1245 - Baltimore First Responders Child Care Support and Accessibility Program – Establishment. This bill is a vital step toward addressing a silent crisis within our emergency services: the severe lack of accessible, affordable, and flexible childcare for Baltimore’s first responders.

Police officers, firefighters, and 911 Specialists operate on grueling, non-traditional schedules that include overnight shifts, 24-hour rotations, and emergency call-backs. Standard childcare facilities, which typically operate on a 9-to-5 basis, are incompatible with these demands. By establishing the Baltimore First Responders Child Care Support and Accessibility Program, Maryland recognizes that public safety begins with a stable home life.

This legislation is an investment in the recruitment and retention of a diverse and highly skilled workforce. We are currently seeing a national trend of burnout and early retirement in the public safety sector, often driven by the inability to balance family obligations with the rigors of the job.

HB 1245 provides a way to make first responder professions more viable for young families and single parents. Again, we ask for a favorable report on HB 1245 to ensure that those who care for our citizens are cared for in return. Thank you.

