



*To Lead, Advocate, and Connect as the Voice of Business*

## **House Bill 944 - Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program**

Ways and Means Committee  
Appropriations Committee

February 24, 2021

### **SUPPORT**

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), as the voice of Montgomery County business, strongly supports House Bill 994. This bill would establish the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program in the Department of Education. The Department would then provide grants to local jurisdictions or child care licensing regions to increase the supply and ensure the sustainability of family child care providers in areas with above average rates of poverty and unemployment.

Our Chamber and its members have long advocated for a strong childcare system – understanding that childcare facilities are they themselves, a business, but also because of how much this industry impacts our parental workforce. Prior to COVID-19, the Chamber sought its Board of Directors thought leadership and asked them what their top concern as a business leader was and there was one answer that emerged over any other - even with the incredible diversity in size and industry on the MCCC Board of Directors. The answer that emerged was attraction and retention of top talent. When the Chamber dove into that more and asked what employees concerned about, reliable and affordable childcare quickly emerged as a front runner.

There is a true economic cost of unreliable childcare employee absences and turnover due to childcare costs employers \$2.41 billion, it reduces the State's economic output by \$1.28 billion, and reduced Maryland tax revenue by \$117 million in 2016.

When COVID-19 hit, the importance of childcare was only further highlighted. A few months ago, MCCC held a Chamber Chat webinar on the topic of childcare and COVID-19. In this webinar, over 120 local businesses tuned in and one theme that emerged was the need for public funding to support this vital industry. Even if every resident were able to get a vaccine tomorrow, if child cannot go to a safe and reliable childcare center, employees will not be able to return to the workplace.

Beyond COVID-19, a strong and reliable childcare system in the state should be viewed as an economic development recruitment tool. To compete for talent with our surrounding jurisdictions and across the nation, Maryland must differentiate ourselves in the market. Childcare should absolutely be a part of that discussion as our state has done incredible work in the area of childcare accessibility and affordability.

For the aforementioned reasons, **the Chamber strongly supports House 994 and respectfully urges a favorable report.**

*The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) accelerates the success of our nearly 400 members by advocating for increased business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and is proud to be a Montgomery County Green Certified Business.*

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