



November 8, 2021

The Honorable Tom Hucker
Council President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Hucker and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) supports *Bill 38-21, Economic Development Fund – Local Business Child Care Grant Program - Established* and thanks lead sponsors Councilmembers Alborno and Navarro for introducing the bill. MCCC also thanks Councilmembers Katz, Friedson, Riemer, Hucker, Glass, Rice, and Jawando for co-sponsoring Bill 38-21.

Bill 38-21 allows for a grant from Montgomery County to match an employer's contribution to an employee's dependent Flexible Spending Account (FSA). The grant would match up to 50% of the annual amount of child care contributions to a dependent FSA for employees who earn less than \$125,000 annually. The bill stipulates that eligible employers include for-profit and non-profit entities who have 50 or fewer employees and provide a dependent FSA to employees.

MCCC, in collaboration with Councilmembers Alborno and Navarro, identified the issue of child care access and affordability as an economic imperative that needed to be addressed to help Montgomery grow and prosper. Councilmembers fully understood that there are economic costs to unreliable and unaffordable child care.

MCCC contends that this legislation was critical when it was first introduced in early 2020, but it is even more important now. As Maryland continues to reopen and more people go back to work, child care challenges present a growing threat to the County's economy. The rapid workplace changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have created new challenges in attracting and retaining employees. Now more than ever, the availability of quality and affordable child care is an important determinate to the success of the local workforce.

Bill 38-21 addresses many of these challenges by decreasing the cost of doing business in the County, thus creating an improved business climate. An improved and more competitive business climate will benefit County employers and employees alike. For local employers, Bill 38-21 will bring about improved attraction and retention of quality employees. For local employees, this benefit will make Montgomery County a less expensive place to work and allow more parents to enter the workforce at a time of their choosing.

Again, MCCC supports the passage of Bill 38-21 and looks forward to continuing to partner on ways to move Montgomery County forward. As you continue your important work, please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Godwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized 'G'.

Georgette "Gigi" Godwin
President & CEO
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce