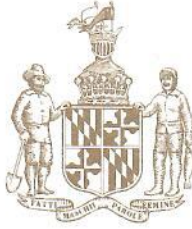


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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 711 – Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program - Established**

March 9, 2021

Mister Chairman and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Even prior to the pandemic, the number of Family Child Care Programs has been on the decline. These programs, which are different from Child Care Centers, are typically owned and run by women who care for up to eight children at a time in their homes. In Maryland the number of these Family Child Care programs have gone from approximately 12,500 in 1996 to 5000 in 2020. This is a trend that is mirrored nationally. The pandemic will likely add to this decline. There are many factors that have contributed to this decline: arduous approval processes through multiple layers of governments, lack of resources and support for their small business, and access to professional development.

In Montgomery County a program was developed to help individuals who want to start a family child care program or need help with an existing program by providing resources not readily available or in some instances not available at all. This highly successful program that was set up with a relatively small budget of \$300,000 for staff, materials, credentialing support and startup assistance, after two years, has helped to create 61 new family child care centers and opened up over 300 new child care slots in some of the highest poverty areas in the county. A majority of these programs are run by individuals whose first language is other than English.

Senate Bill 711 takes this very successful program and sets up a pilot program in the State. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will administer the pilot program in concert with the State's network of child care resource centers. The Pilot program grants will be awarded to one urban, one suburban and one rural jurisdiction or child care licensing region, and a local match in funding will be required to secure the State funding. Each jurisdiction that receives an award must target the program's efforts to high-need areas.

Maryland families depend on quality child care to allow parents to keep their jobs and support their families. This legislation supports not only the parents who need care for their children, but Marylanders who are trying to open and run a small business to support their families. Increasing the availability of high-quality child care is integral to the state's economic stability and this is just one way to increase childcare openings in Maryland and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 711.