

montgomery moving forward

mobilizing leaders to solve our biggest problems together
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February 23, 2021

Esteemed Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget and Taxation Committees,

Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), a collective impact initiative of Nonprofit Montgomery, is committed to advancing equitable, accessible systems change in the early care and education (ECE) sector in Montgomery County. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, MMF convened over 50 labor, business, education, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. This diverse cross-sector Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition understands that a resilient early care and education workforce is necessary for our state's economic recovery.

MMF supports SB 890, the Child Care Provider Support Act, which would establish a grant program to provide funds to support the development and expansion of child care programs, and **we support language that extends this grant program to family child care providers as well as center based providers.**

Without this type of support, many child care programs will close, many child care employees will lose their jobs, other employees may have to leave the workforce due to lack of child care, and many children will not receive the quality early learning that they need to succeed in school and beyond.

While the Governor's recent announcement of a one-time \$60 million Pandemic Relief Grant Program for Child Care Providers is important and necessary, the child care sector needs and deserves continuous public investment if it is to develop infrastructure that can withstand future shocks. ECE is an essential component of Maryland's economy and is vital to a thriving and equitable community. It enables working parents to get to work, be it virtually or at home, and be productive knowing their children are supported, learning, and safe. ECE enables employers to attract and retain qualified staff.

However, without sustained help, more ECE providers will close their doors or be forced to raise tuition and fees. According to a recent study by the Maryland Family Network, 67% of child care business owners have experienced a loss in revenue due to closures and mandated reduced attendance, with 60% of them reporting that they will need financial support to survive. As a result, more families will have to choose between their children and their jobs. In Montgomery County, where residents must make at least \$90,000 to make ends meet, families can ill afford to dedicate more of their income to ECE. As more families are faced with leaving the workforce, employers will lack the talent to fuel our rebound. Our families, our children, our economies, and our communities will suffer.

ECE is an economic and social justice imperative and a pillar of Maryland's economy that demands our utmost and immediate investment. **We urge you to give SB890 a favorable report.**

Respectfully and sincerely,

Montgomery Moving Forward Co-Chairs and Members of the Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition

Lindsey Allard Agnamba, CEO, School Readiness Consulting; **Laura Bardini**, Executive Director, Rockville Day Care Association, Inc.; **Kevin Beverly**, Economic Development Advocate; **Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta**, Director, CentroNia; **Bob Buchanan**, Buchanan Partners and 2030 Group; **Jody Burghardt**, Division Director, Children, Youth and Family Services, Sheppard Pratt; **Community Action Board**, Montgomery County; **Ruby Daniels**, Director, Maryland State Family Child Care Association; **Stewart Edelstein**, Education Advocate; **Sharon Friedman**, Director, Montgomery Moving Forward; **Martine Sadarangani Gordon**, Vice President of Programs, Washington Area Women's Foundation; **Michelle Green**, Executive Director, Montgomery Child Care Association; **Joanne Hurt**, Executive Director, Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day; **Tiffany Jones**, Family Childcare Provider; **Christina Lopez**, President, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC); **Susan Madden**, Montgomery Moving Forward, Co-Chair and Chief Government Relations Officer, Montgomery College; **Benjamin Orr**, President and CEO of the Maryland Center on Economic Policy; **Christina Peusch**, Executive Director; Maryland State Child Care Association; **Laura Weeldreyer**, Executive Director, Maryland Family Network