



POSITION STATEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 711 – GROWING FAMILY CHILD CARE OPPORTUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM – ESTABLISHED

Sponsor – Senator King

March 9, 2021

**DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 711, which would establish the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program in the State Department of Education. The program would provide grants to local jurisdictions to establish and support pilot programs intended to increase the supply of family child care providers in areas with above average rates of poverty and unemployment or areas with a lack of available child care providers.

The GBC has been actively involved in supporting businesses as they weather the ill effects of the pandemic, restrictions placed on business operations, and the resulting negative economic impact on businesses. To address the challenges and to assist businesses to recover the Greater Baltimore Committee created the GBC COVID-19 Business Recovery Advisory Council, comprised of regional business executives, with a mission to provide assistance, develop programs, and to make policy recommendations to benefit businesses recover from the pandemic, with a particular focus on small and minority-owned businesses. One of the recommendations of the advisory council called for the GBC and its member companies to advocate for state and local governments to address the immediate shortage and to create long-term solutions pertaining to child care through targeted policy or funding initiatives.

There is an urgent need to ensure that adequate high-quality child care is available for the children of Maryland's workforce. Increasing the number of licensed child care providers is integral to the state's business ecosystem. Without affordable and dependable child care options, Maryland's workforce is challenged to perform their employment responsibilities and duties to maximum capacity and capabilities resulting in loss of production in business operations.

Senate Bill 711 is consistent with the Greater Baltimore Committee's *2021 Legislative Priorities*, which calls for policy, funding, and regulatory solutions to accelerate economic recovery with an emphasis on support for small and minority-owned businesses.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 711.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 66-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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