



**Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
SB 711 – Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program - Established
Support**

The Mayor and Council are thankful to Chairman Pinsky and members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for the opportunity to share written comments on SB 711 – Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program – Established. The Rockville Mayor and Council support this legislation. We thank Senator King for her leadership to bring this measure forward.

Advocating for State financial support for childcare services is a Mayor and Council priority. High-quality childcare for children in the early years is a critical factor in healthy child development. Further, it is foundational to a family's economic well-being. Rockville and Montgomery County are concerned about the declining number of licensed home child-care providers, and whether or not existing businesses can survive the economic uncertainty resulting from the global pandemic. SB 711 supports this need by establishing the Growing Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program in the Maryland State Department of Education and enhancing local pilot programs in the State.

SB 711 is in alignment with Montgomery County's Early Care and Education Initiative goals (ECE) to support the expansion of home-based early care and education (ECE) seats; increase access and affordability to quality ECE; enhance the sustainability of existing ECE programs; and establish community partnerships that support childcare.

We support the provisions in SB 711 that strengthen home-based childcare as follows:

- In FY23 and FY24 - award \$150,000 to an urban, suburban, and a childcare licensing region in rural area, for a total of \$450,000.
- Target the use of the grant to increase the supply and ensure the sustainability of family childcare providers with above average rates of poverty and unemployment or areas with a lack of available childcare providers.
- Provide multilingual outreach to recruit individuals to become registered family childcare providers within MSDE.
- Establish partnerships with local chambers of commerce, or other local or State organizations for family childcare providers that support small businesses and women and minority businesses, as specified.
- Provide technical assistance, financial incentives, and start-up assistance for recruited individuals, as they navigate the process of becoming a registered family childcare provider.

We recognize the need for a comprehensive system of high quality, accessible, and affordable early childcare in Maryland. These programs are cost-effective, close education and opportunity gaps, and increase economic benefits. These positive outcomes not only improve the child and family, but also the community, by preparing children for a future of opportunity in a rapidly changing global economy. To prepare our children to reach their full potential, we must build a pathway to success in the early years, during this critical period of brain development. SB 711 is positive public policy that will further these goals by supporting the expansion of high-quality childcare and making it more accessible for working families that need it the most. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide SB 711 with a favorable report and advance it to the Senate floor for a vote.