



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

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TO: Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbary, Chair
Delegate Alonzo T. Washington, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)
DATE: 02/25/2022
RE: HB0089 Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child Care
Expansion Grant Program – Established

The MLLC supports HB0089 Child Care Stabilization Grant Program and Child Care Expansion Grant Program – Established

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0089.

High-quality child care is critical for Latino households. A large number of Latino families are low-income with both parents employed and working odd hours or multiple shifts. Child care availability is especially limited for families who have night shifts or live in rural areas. Over 25% of parents have reported challenges in finding care that was affordable, high quality, and convenient. The Hispanic Research Center also reported that it was difficult to find child care centers that had open slots, were available outside Monday-Friday or on an emergency/sick child basis. Despite the extensive hours that Latino parents work, their low income makes them opt to leave children with acquaintances, siblings, or other family members.

As expected, this means that infants, toddlers, and children are not always in a safe environment. These individuals may not monitor and supervise children as much as necessary. Nonetheless, when examining further studies, it becomes evident that low-income families (common in the Latino community) are forced to take the decisions mentioned above. In Maryland, single parents pay 39.5% of their income for center-based infant child care. The annual price of center-based child care for two children would cost a married-couple family (living at or below the federal poverty level) over 100% of their annual household income.

The bill creates two grant programs supporting the child care industry in sustaining (preventing closure of childcare businesses in danger of closing in the next 12 months due to financial hardship) and expanding (funding for staff training, supplies, location improvements, etc). These grants are continuously available. Applicants can benefit from one grant type at a time and may not receive a combination of either grant type for more than 5 consecutive years.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0089.