



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. Atterbeary, Chair
Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: March 1, 2023

RE: HB0495 Early Childhood Development – Child Care
Scholarship Program – Funding

The MLLC supports HB0495 Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program – Funding, 2023

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 HB0495.

The drastic rise in child care costs coupled with the significant reduction in child care providers puts a financial strain and burden on families who continue to struggle with inflation and rising costs. Maryland is ranked 7th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for most expensive infant care; and families with two children face an even greater burden - a typical family in Maryland would have to spend 29.4% of its income on child care for an infant and a 4-year-old.¹ HB0495 aims to rebuild Maryland's child care capacity and support families by helping to make child care more affordable so more parents can get back to work and more children can get the high-quality care they deserve. The high cost of child care is particularly prohibitive to low income Marylanders, and Latino Marylanders have one of the highest poverty rates, at 13.5%.² The Program enhancements also ensure that providers, who are often women of color, are paid higher salaries. According to the Migration Policy Institute, immigrants make up 26% of the overall early childhood education and care workforce, and 15% identify as Hispanic.³ Nationally, child care workers' families are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as other workers' families (11.8% are in poverty compared with 5.8%).⁴ In Maryland the median wage for child care workers was \$11.59 in 2019, a 2% decrease since 2017.⁵ A median child care worker in Maryland would have to spend 64.5% of their earnings to put their own child in infant care.⁶

HB0495 makes the latest enhancements to the Child Care Scholarship Program permanent, and limits the circumstances under which the Child Care Scholarship Program enrollment may be frozen, guaranteeing access to the Program for all families who meet eligibility. This will enable more Latinx and immigrant families to enroll their children in childcare, and those who are employed as childcare workers get paid fairly.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0495.

¹ [Child care costs in Maryland. \(2020, October\). Economic Policy Institute.](#)

² [Jefferson, S., & Quinlan, M. \(2020\). Maryland Poverty Profiles 2020. Marylanders Against Poverty.](#)

³ [Maryland: Quick Stats on Young Children and Workers Providing Early Childhood Education and Care \(ECEC\). \(2015\). Migration Policy Institute.](#)

⁴ [Child care costs in Maryland. \(2020, October\). Economic Policy Institute.](#)

⁵ [Maryland – Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020. \(2020\). Center for the Study of Childhood Employment \(CSCCE\).](#)

⁶ [Child care costs in Maryland. \(2020, October\). Economic Policy Institute.](#)