



## **SEIU Local 500**

901 Russell Avenue, Suite 300  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879

### **Testimony in FAVOR of HB 495 Early Childhood Development Child Care Scholarship Program - Funding**

House Ways and Means Committee  
February 15, 2022  
1:00 PM

Presented by: Terry Cavanagh representing SEIU Local 500

We urge a **FAVORABLE Report on HB 495**

Among the two million SEIU members across the country are 200,00 child care providers. In Maryland, Local 500 represents thousands of family child care providers.

The last three years have been like no other for most, if not all, of us. The impact of COVID-19 was probably felt more acutely by parents, children and providers in our child care system than in any other. The top reason why so many Marylanders did not return to work when their businesses or employers reopened was they could not find affordable, reliable quality child care.

HB 495 addresses the needs that so many of us face trying to balance the need to work and the need to make sure our children are in a safe, nurturing environment – while not going broke.

In 2018, the Maryland General Assembly set us on a path to significantly improve our child care system. At that time we were at the 9<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market – an embarrassment for

a state with our resources. We committed to reach the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile and expand eligibility from family income of \$35,000 to \$72,000 for a family of four.

The good news is we have made great progress. The more complicated news is we need to do better and we got there in large part on federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

Passing HB 495 would show a commitment and investment in Maryland’s working families and employers. We can get the CCS Scholarship rates to the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile and just over a family income of \$90,000.

There is a cost involved. The ARP funds must be spent by the end of 2026 and there is no guarantee they will continue. We cannot afford to go backward. Maryland’s families cannot go fall behind. Our economy should not have such great uncertainty.

Thank you.

We ask a **FAVORABLE REPORT ON HB 495**.