



**Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS of
House Bill 352: Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024**

**Appropriations Committee
Position: Favorable with Amendments**

February 28, 2024

Strong Schools Maryland applauds the joint efforts of the Maryland General Assembly and the Moore–Miller Administration in prioritizing public education, the greatest investment in our collective future, in the FY25 state budget. We urge the legislature at large, and this committee in particular, to reject all decisions made from a framework of scarcity and to instead, engage in the urgent, complex, necessary discussions about how to grow state revenue in a progressive, sustainable way (as outlined in the [Fair Share for Maryland Plan](#)) Given the bill's evidence of a collective policy mindset that buys into the zero-sum myth of scarcity, **Strong Schools Maryland supports House Bill 352, with amendments.**

The Child Care Scholarship Program ought to be lauded as a jewel in the infrastructure of our state. Despite the several years of hampering the Program in the previous Administration, a global pandemic, and seismic shifts in leadership at the state level, the Child Care Scholarship is popular and effective—so much so that the number of families participating in the program exceeded analysts' projections. This is an example of a successful policy, one that requires additional resources to grow, not artificial limitations that fail to consider the impacts on children, families, and communities.

As you debate this legislation, we urge the committee to remove the provision that would allow for the Administration to re-institute waiting lists for the Child Care Scholarship Program. The only social policy outcomes to be had if the provision remains are grim: more families being artificially denied opportunities despite clear supply and demand; fewer child care providers being incentivized to participate in the program, if in the industry at all; rougher transitions to elementary education for our youngest students; and greater economic, social, and educational inequity.

Additionally, we note the changes to the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports' use of funds. If resulting from the Commission's recommendations, we support this change.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to make the suggested amendment and return a favorable report on House Bill 352.

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