



## Senate Bill 881

### *Child Care Providers and Employees - Bonuses - Alterations*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 15, 2023

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 881. This bill would support currently licensed child care providers in the state and would incentivize the establishment of new providers by increasing hiring and retention bonuses provided by the State to the industry. It builds off of last year's bill to establish these bonuses and comes at a time when the child care community and county resources are pushed to their brink.

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the shortage of licensed child care providers to support the safe care of Maryland's kids and support the state's working families. Maryland does not currently have enough licensed providers to meet the needs of families balancing work, child care, and the ongoing pandemic. Many providers had to cease operation during the pandemic out of public health risk and financial instability associated with COVID-19. Those providers that remain in operation are struggling to stay afloat, and many are unable to secure adequate staff to provide reliable child care.

During the 2022 legislative session, the General Assembly passed a bill seeking to address these issues by providing existing child care staff with bonuses, as well as providing hiring bonuses for new staff. That bill included significant state funding to provide existing child care providers with funds to offset the hiring bonuses of new hires for FY23. SB 811 builds off that critical work and includes an annual appropriation of \$6 million for FY24 and FY25, deepening the impact of this important resource.

While counties have creatively addressed the needs of reliable and safe child care, they welcome state resources to help stabilize the industry and expand services. Reliable and safe child care is critical for economic development, successful families and communities, and the development of children. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 881 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.