



HB0944 - Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program – Established
Presented to Hon. Anne Kaiser and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee
February 24, 2021 1:30pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the House Ways and Means Committee **a favorable report on HB0944 - Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program – Established**, sponsored by Delegate Jared Solomon.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every childbearing individual has the right to decide if, when, and how many children to have, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. In doing so, we support measures that expand access to child care choices for families.

Just over 20% of Maryland workers have a child under the age of five,¹ meaning child care is not just essential to families, but to the economy as well. Families face many obstacles when attempting to secure child care for their children: cost, transportation, lack of needed hours for care, just to name a few. Child care providers also face obstacles to keep their doors open. The average annual wage for family child care providers, in particular, is only \$39,884, which is not reflective of the many business costs of operating a family child care and well below the state average income of \$67,860.²³ What's more, the number of family child care slots has been in decline over the past decade, with the pandemic taking a particularly harsh toll on the child care industry as a whole.

The Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program has the opportunity to focus resources on areas that are in particular need for more child care slots and create jobs and offset costs for new family child care providers. This program has a strong emphasis on sustainability which ensures family child care homes can continue to operate and families can continue to access safe, quality care. We do respectfully request that this program consider what can be done to offer more child care options to parenting students.

Families deserve choices when it comes to accessing child care for their children, and child care providers deserve respect and support for the essential and difficult work they do. The ability to parent with dignity is essential to the realization of reproductive freedom, and being able to access and choose quality and affordable child care is an integral part of providing care with dignity. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0944**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Counting Our Losses :The Hidden Cost to Marylanders of an Inadequate Child CareSystem, Maryland Family Network, https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/MarylandFamilyNetwork_Countingourlosses_FullReport_Hyperlinked_Singles%20%281%29.pdf. Accessed on 22 February 202.

² Maryland Family Network Public Policy Handbook 2020 – 2021, Maryland Family Network, <https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/Public%20Policy%20Handbook%202020-21.pdf>. Accessed on 22 February 2021.

³County Employment and Wages in Maryland – Second Quarter 2020, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/news-release/countyemploymentandwages_maryland.htm, Accessed on 22 February 2021.