



**Testimony Concerning SB 610**  
**“Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program - Funding”**  
**Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**  
**February 12, 2025**

**Position: Support**

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports SB 610, which would ensure continued funding for the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program, which increases and sustains the supply of family child care.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

Registered family child care is a critical component of Maryland's child care delivery system. Family child care providers offer child care that most closely resembles the care that children receive in their own homes. Family child care providers care for many children who have special needs or need care during nontraditional hours. In rural areas, where population density may not support larger child care centers, family child care providers play a particularly important role. They also provide linguistically and culturally appropriate care within many communities in the State.

The Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Program has increased the supply of family child care programs and ensured the sustainability of new and existing ones, particularly in underserved communities. In just 25 months, the Program has opened 198 new businesses and added 1,375 child care slots across 19 jurisdictions. This includes 312 slots specifically for infants and toddlers.

The Program helps address the child care access challenges that often impact a family's ability to work or attend school. It helps reverse the trend of family child care closures, especially in underserved areas like Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore, and supports the efforts of low-income women—many in communities of color—to establish successful small businesses.

MFN respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 610.

**Submitted by** Laura Weeldreyer, Executive Director

