



November 29, 2021

The Honorable Tom Hucker
Council President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Hucker and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) supports Bill 42-21, *Child Care - Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity - Established*. MCCC thanks the lead sponsors, Councilmembers Alborno, Navarro, and Rice, for introducing this legislation and Councilmembers Friedson, Glass, Hucker, Katz, Jawando, and Riemer for co-sponsoring Bill 42-21. MCCC, in collaboration with community stakeholders, has identified increasing child care access and affordability as an economic imperative that must be addressed to help Montgomery grow and prosper.

Bill 42-21 would create the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity in Montgomery County. This public-private entity would develop recommendations for increasing the availability and access of high-quality early care and education programs, which must have a focus on underrepresented populations. This coordinating entity, consisting of 13 ex-officio government officials and 12 private sector members, would report annually by October 1 on its efforts.

In Montgomery County, creating a pathway for more accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early care education (ECE) programs would allow more parents to choose whether to participate in the workforce. Providing high-quality early care is a critical component for employers, who rely on their employees having reliable child care so they can come to work every day. Bill 42-21 takes on an even greater need as rapid workplace changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the challenges in attracting and retaining employees.

Now more than ever, the availability of quality and affordable child care is an important determinant to the success of the local economy. The entity created by this bill would facilitate a sustainable economic recovery for the County by helping identify needs and coordinate resources across the entire ECE system. Bill 42-21 furthers economic activity by decreasing the cost of doing business in the County, thus creating an improved business climate.

A high quality and sustainable ECE system would also provide a solid educational foundation for children. The entity created by Bill 42-21 would ensure that the County is better able to prepare children for school and thus build an improved talent pipeline for the workforce of tomorrow. An effective child care system can serve as a differentiator for Montgomery County by driving economic development and strengthening workforce development.

Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
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Again, MCCC supports the passage of Bill 42-21 and looks forward to continuing to partner on ways to move Montgomery County forward. As you continue your important work, please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Godwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized 'G'.

Georgette "Gigi" Godwin
President & CEO
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce