

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity
COUNTY COUNCIL MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND - July 15, 2025
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

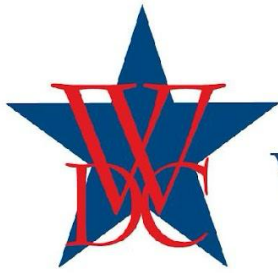
Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)**. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC is pleased to support, with amendments, **Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity**. WDC applauds the County Council for its resolute focus on building a robust Early Care and Education (ECE) system in the county and for its establishment and ongoing support of the Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA). WDC supports the intent of Councilmember Alborno and Council Vice President Jawando to provide clearer focus for the entity through **Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity**. However, WDC urges consideration of several amendments to this bill which we believe are critical to the county's continued progress.

First, we must acknowledge the *status quo*. Our ECE system is in crisis. Our families are in crisis. This directly impacts women's workforce participation and the county and state tax base, as is clear in the Maryland Comptroller's recent report. Now is not the time for half measures.

The COA, since its establishment by the County Council, has effectively partnered with an array of stakeholders and the broader community to address the critical needs of county families, children, and ECE providers. COA leadership is strong, knowledgeable, and committed and the organization is well-respected across the ECE ecosystem. WDC believes it would be counterproductive to clip the wings of the COA just as it is making real impact. Thus, we respectfully request that the County Council amend 23-25 to **restore the original "direct services" text contained in Sec. 1. Section 10K** and by **explicitly empowering the COA to research and advocate for universal ECE and a dedicated and sustainable funding source**.

We understand that the County Council is responsible for providing oversight of government funds. We also understand the County Council's reluctance to provide a quasi-independent organization with



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

the power of the purse. Nonetheless, we believe **the COA must be able to issue grants to fund many of the activities it is required to perform** but for which the COA may require specialized support to execute. These activities include advocacy, education, fundraising, and the annual collection of specific data execution of a needs assessment (listed as duties, 1-9; Sec. 1. Section 10I). In addition, we believe that the CoA, in consultation with HHS's ECE leadership, should retain the ability to use grants to drive and scale innovation in the ECE system, pilot improvements and new approaches, and support small ECE providers. And, so, we again respectfully request that the County Council amend Expedited Bill 23-25 to reflect this, by reversing its proposed amendments to Sec. 1. Section 10K and restoring the original "direct services" text.

WDC requests an additional amendment. WDC believes that Early Care and Education is part of the critical infrastructure of our community; ECE enables families, children, and businesses to flourish. For too long, the costs of this public good have been disproportionately borne by the families, by unpaid family caregivers (largely mothers), and by underpaid ECE professionals. And so, as you are updating the authorizing legislation for the COA, we strongly urge you to add an amendment that **explicitly empowers the COA** to research and advocate for **universal early care and education** as well as for **the dedicated and sustainable funding source** that will be required to make universal ECE a reality.

We ask for your support, **with amendments**, for **Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity**.

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President
Cyn.rubenstein@gmail.com
202-246-4409

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Committee Co-Chair
katelstein@yahoo.com
202-294-5141