



COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

June 8, 2020

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
U.S. Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

The Montgomery County Commission on Child Care is writing to urge your support of **HR 6800, The Heroes Act**.

The role of the Commission on Child Care is to advise the Montgomery County Executive and Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable and accessible child care. We are comprised of a committed group of volunteers who are dedicated to raising awareness on issues involving quality, affordability and accessibility in the early care and education arena. **We urge you to support HR 6800 The Heroes Act to provide the child care community the financial support needed to survive this health crisis.**

According to a Maryland Family Network (2020) survey, *51% of child care programs in the state say they may close if families must keep children home...as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, 67% of child care business owners already report a financial loss...the majority of respondents report losing between \$1,000 - \$5,000 per week of closure. The child care professionals say there needs to be ongoing support for providers from policy makers if they are going to continue to remain open or reopen when restrictions are lifted. If not, already high tuition rates could rise even more in order to survive say 17% of respondents...68% of the state's child care programs are currently open...albeit, 78% of open programs, operating at reduced capacity... 60% say they need financial support and 30% also want better access to cleaning supplies and Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs). Seventy-two percent of respondents say government grants to help defray fixed costs during a closure would make a huge difference...State-wide there are more than 8,000 child care programs licensed to care for over 213,000 children. If half of these programs closed it would amount to a fiscal, domestic, and education crisis unlike any our state has ever seen. Parents need safe quality child care to be able to work and to keep our economy moving. A closure of this magnitude would cripple our workforce. Decades of research also proves that child[ren] who have access to quality early learning environments fare far better in life than those without this advantage. If half of the child care infrastructure suddenly disappeared, Maryland would be paying for it for decades in lost wages, decreased physical and mental health, and in significantly increased social spending on incarceration, drug treatment, crime, and special education.*ⁱ

Department of Health and Human Services

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The Commission on Child Care asks that you support HR 6800 The Heroes Act to help save child care in Maryland and the rest of this Country.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Belski".

Michelle Belski
Chair

c: Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S. Senate

Jamie Raskin, U.S House of Representatives

John Sarbanes, U.S. House of Representatives

David Trone, U.S. House of Representatives