

montgomery moving forward

mobilizing leaders to solve our biggest problems together
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July 15, 2020

Dear Senator Van Hollen,

Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), an initiative of Nonprofit Montgomery, is grateful for your leadership and commitment to high quality, affordable early care and education (ECE). The rebuilding of ECE in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, including the recovery of child care providers, is key to both our state and nation's economic recovery and a thriving future for our children, families, and communities following the pandemic.

MMF has engaged a diverse cross-sector coalition to advocate for the recovery of the child care sector and its workforce as a pathway to building a true ECE system that is resilient and sustainable; a system that results in a productive workforce of today and creates the talent necessary to grow and sustain our economic future. Our coalition, that includes labor, business, education, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders from the early care and education sector in DC, Maryland, and Virginia, believes that there is an urgent and immediate need for another round of federal relief funding that includes direct and specific support for the child care sector. **The return of the child care sector is necessary for the economic recovery of our nation as well as ultimately building a robust, diverse, and resilient ECE system which will pave the way for long term economic gains for our county and our region.**

COVID-19 has exposed the crisis in the ECE workforce to be at its breaking point. According to a May 2020 Maryland Family Network survey of early care and education providers, 51% of respondents said they might close if children are kept home as a result of the pandemic. As you know, most child care programs operate on razor thin profit margins, which leaves them particularly vulnerable when an economic downturn hits. Center-based programs in Maryland that typically serve over 120,000 children are currently operating at 25% capacity. Family child care programs, for example, that were the primary providers serving essential personnel during the crisis, are unable to meet their financial obligations and require assistance to remain operational.

Child care providers need help in the immediate term to help them to reopen, including accessing health and safety materials, and developing and implementing new protocols. They need help in the mid-term related to paying for rent and operational and staffing costs and accessing technical assistance for funding and other supports. Providers also need help in the long-term with accounting for lost income due to low registration numbers, investing in sustainable early care and education career pathways for providers, and stronger infrastructure to ensure the sector's resilience during challenging times.

We call upon you to use your leadership to ensure an investment in the immediate development of the child care workforce and the building of a stronger future for the ECE sector. A tangible investment in the early care and education workforce at this critical time will recognize the true value of child care providers, the majority of who are women and women of color. Moreover, your investment in the ECE sector will

demonstrate commitment to building a more equitable sector that is on the frontlines of supporting the workforce of today and nurturing the workforce of tomorrow.

Please act today to address the immediate recovery, development, and sustainability of the early care and education sector across our region and state. **Specifically, we ask that you demonstrate commitment for the early care and education workforce by:**

- Supporting the HEROES Act that will provide much needed funding for workers and families in Maryland
- Mobilizing Congress to pass the “Child Care is Essential Act” that will provide much needed realistic relief to the child care sector for immediate recovery and long term sustainability

The survival of the ECE sector necessitates immediate action and sustained investment. We stand ready to work with you to move from hope and vision to pragmatic tactics and action.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Montgomery Moving Forward Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition Members

Marilyn Balcombe, Ph.D., President & CEO, Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

Michelle Belski, Chair, Montgomery County Commission on Child Care

Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta, Maryland State Director, CentroNia

Leah Bradley, Executive Director, Empowering the Ages

Bob Buchanan, 2030 Group President

Dr. Deann Collins, Director-CARES Act, Title I & Early Childhood Programs, Montgomery County Public Schools

Raymond L. Crowel, Psy.D., Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Ruby Daniels, President Maryland State Family Child Care Association

Stew Edelstein, Executive Director, Universities at Shady Grove

Georgette Godwin, President & CEO, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

Michelle Greene, Executive Director, Maryland Child Care Association, Inc.

Martine Sadarangani Gordon, Vice President of Programs, Washington Area Women’s Foundation

Joanne Hurt, Executive Director, Wonders Early Learning and Extended Day

Keri Hyde, Executive Director, Ready At Five

Tiffany Jones, Family Child Care Provider, Precious Moments Family Childcare

Liran Laor, Early Childhood Consultant

Christina Lopez, President, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC)

Lesley MacDonald, Executive Director, Nonprofit Montgomery

Susan Madden, Co-Chair, Montgomery Moving Forward; Chief Government Relations Officer, Montgomery College

Montgomery County Community Action Board

Pia Morrison, President, SEIU Local 500

Benjamin Orr, Executive Director, Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Christina Peusch, Executive Director, Maryland State Child Care Association

Bill Tompkins, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation

Tonia Wellons, President and CEO of the Greater Washington Community Foundation

Laura Weeldryer, Executive Director, Maryland Family Network