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INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

COUNTY AGENCY LEGISLATIVE COMMENT REQUEST FORM

Reviewing Agency: The Office of Human Rights

Bill/Resolution Number: CB-018-2026

Brief Summary of the Bill/Resolution:

This bill mandates child care providers to include a hardship withdrawal provision in enrollment contracts. The bill provides a definition of hardship events and outlines acceptable documentation of hardship events. The bill also outlines penalties and authorizes the Office of Human Rights (OHR) to enforce violations of the subtitle.

Agency Impact:

Will this bill impact your Agency financially or operationally, or your Agency's mission?

Yes No Undeterminable at this time

If yes, please select the appropriate impact: Positive Impact Negative Impact No Impact

Discussion of Impact:

This bill provides the Office of Human Rights with the authority to investigate unfair, abusive, and deceptive practices. Contingent on funding approval, this bill will allow the Office of Human Rights to evolve the mission and grow in expertise in the realm of consumer protection where authorization was not previously held. This new authority for the Office of Human Rights will benefit the residents of the county by providing them with support in the event that they experience a hardship and as a consequence are no longer able to uphold a contract for child care.

Fiscal Impact: /SB

The enactment of this bill will require the OHR to investigate claims under Division 6 - Child Care Consumer Contract Protection. According to a Child Care Demographics 2024 report from Maryland Child Care Resources Network, it's projected that the County will have approximately 250 center-based programs in 2028 and about 450 family child care providers in 2028. If the County Council enacts this bill, the OHR will receive a large number of claims under this bill that will need to be investigated. In order to investigate these claims, the OHR will need an increase in its employee complement, to add at least two additional investigators. The estimated budget per investigator ranges from \$45,634.00 to \$98,438.00 which will total to approximately \$91,268.00-\$196,876.00.

Agency Position Recommendation:

Support Oppose Support with Amendments No position.

Please specify any suggested amendments in the space below?

Additional Information:

Has your agency been contacted by the State Department of Legislative Services staff regarding this proposal?

Yes No

If yes, please provide comments about the discussion.

• **Agency Contact:**

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