



February 20, 2025

The Honorable Chair L. Louise Lucas
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, V.A. 23219

The Honorable Chair Luke Torian
General Assembly Building
201 North 9th Street
Richmond, V.A. 23219

Dear Chair Lucas, Chair Torian, and Budget Conferees,

On behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our support for the proposed Budget item appropriating \$25,000,000 to implement the Employee Child Care Assistance Pilot Program. The Pilot Program is a major investment to incentivize employers to contribute to the child care expenses of their employees via matching funds and would enhance individuals' abilities to access high-quality child care across the Commonwealth.

Access to affordable quality child care is essential for supporting working families, strengthening our workforce, and fostering economic growth. Difficulty in finding affordable, accessible, and quality child care is one of the concerns most frequently cited by working Virginians, and a barrier for many seeking to enter or re-enter the workforce.

The pilot program would match funds invested by employers for child care expenses of their employees. These matching funds would incentivize employers to invest and provide them with a new tool to make their companies more competitive in hiring and retaining high-quality employees. And furthermore, members of Virginia's workforce would benefit from the pilot program by having more affordable and accessible options for child care, encouraging them to stay and thrive as employees while providing for their families.

This investment in the Commonwealth budget will not only benefit children and families but also contribute to the long-term economic vitality of our Commonwealth by strengthening our workforce.

We urge the Budget Conference Committee to appropriate the full funds for this budget item. We look forward to the implementation of this pilot program and the benefits it will bring to Virginia's employers and workforce. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates".

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Senator Creigh Deeds, Senator Mamie Locke, Senator Ryan McDougale, Senator Todd Pillion, Delegate Terry Austin, Delegate Robert Bloxom, Delegate David Bulova, Delegate Betsy Carr, and Delegate Mark Sickles.