

May 7, 2019

Representative John Lively, Chair
House Committee on Economic Development
900 Court. St. NE H-488
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Economic & Workforce Impacts of the Statewide Childcare Shortage

Dear Representative John Lively:

I am writing to you to encourage your support in addressing the current lack of affordable childcare options statewide, due to the negative impact it has on families like mine and the difficult decisions we are forced to make as a result.

Our daughter Eloise was born last May, at which point I was lucky enough to have some saved paid vacation that I was able to use for maternity leave, along with several unpaid weeks as part of the Family Leave Act. While I am very blessed to have my daughter and employment where I earn above a family wage, the reduction in earnings was still difficult and our family struggled a bit in the short term.

The most difficult however was the decision to go back to work, without an affordable childcare option. I had landed myself deep on childcare waitlists, along with other expecting parents, early on in my pregnancy and was still months, and in some cases years, away from the top of those lists when I returned to work. Therefore, my family had to make the decision to either have me return to a job that I loved and pay more than half of my salary to a nanny or stay home with Eloise.

Again, I am lucky enough to earn a living that affords me the ability to make the choice to hire a nanny and return to work. Most of your constituents, however, are not this lucky. I cannot therefore imagine having to make the decision I made if I was not in the situation, I am in. This is not an issue that is unique, nor is it one that cannot be solved. I therefore encourage you to explore solutions and thank you in advance for finding one.

Thank you so much for your consideration and for your support of Oregonians.

Sincerely,



Jessica Fitzpatrick

Mom & Mid-Career Professional
Bend, Oregon

CC: Senator Tim Knopp, Representative Cheri Helt, Representative Jack Zika