



February 8, 2021

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2484
Courtney Helstein, Political Director for Family Forward Oregon
House Committee on Early Childhood

Dear Chair Power, Vice Chairs Reynolds and Zika, and Members of the Committee:

If you talk with any parent or child care provider, they will say that the child care crisis that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic is now a state of emergency. While there are a myriad of issues that contribute to the dysfunction of our child care market, one of the most pervasive issues is the lack of supply across the state, whether families live in urban or rural areas. There are a number of tactics the state could use to help address our supply issue, one of which is providing protection to child care providers operating in rental homes, as addressed in HB 2428.

The current state of our child care industry is dire. More than 50% of Oregon's pre-covid child care slots are gone. And 40% of providers are closed, unlikely to ever reopen.¹ Parents are scrambling to find reliable child care options as they continue to work either from home or in their workplaces. Hardest hit are the 350,000 Oregonians (17% of the labor force) who do not work in occupations that allow them to work from home.² Of the options that parents might have, not all of them meet their families' unique needs—like irregular work schedules or language spoken—and parents across the state often find themselves patching together care just so they can get to work. Home-based child care can help to meet these critical needs for families but many home-based providers who rent their homes are currently left without protections.

This current lack of protection has a disproportionate impact on women who are Black and Indigenous, people of color, and immigrants and refugees, who are more likely to live in rental housing. Low-income families and families of color often prefer home-based care as they see it being a better fit to their cultures, backgrounds, and values.³ Additionally, most families access care near where they live, and we often see greater challenges in access for families living in low-income census tracts. Fair and reasonable protections for home-based providers who rent will help expand child care access and opportunities for culturally specific child care settings, as well as economic opportunity for renters.

House Bill 2484 is one step we can take to increase access and equity in our child care market and Family Forward Oregon strongly urges your support for this bill.

¹ <https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregons-childcare-system-faces-uncertain-future/>

² <https://oregoneconomicanalysis.com/2020/08/27/covid-challenges-working-oregon-parents-graphic-of-the-week/>

³ https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/addressing_decreasing_fcc_providers_revised_march2020_final.pdf