

Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leigh Shelton and I live in Portland, OR. After 15 years, I dropped out of the workforce in 2020. Our income decreased when the pandemic struck and it became clear I wasn't bringing in enough in our construction business to justify our childcare expenses. Our family budget has been quite tight.

I recently gave birth to twin girls, a huge joy, but one that further dims my work prospects. The in-home day care we used for our oldest daughter would cost \$4000 a month for three children, full time. So, I'll stay home. Our free market childcare system doesn't work. The government can and should step in to help families, and in turn, help our economy too.

Even Federal Reserve Chairman, Jerome Powell, a Republican appointee, knows we've got a problem: "Our peers, our competitors, advanced economy democracies, have a more built-up function for child care, and they wind up having substantially higher labor force participation for women," Mr. Powell said recently.

As the legislature considers Oregon's priorities, put childcare at the top of the list. Please support HB 3073. And don't stop there — we need strong, government supported, universal childcare — just like those "advanced democracies" have. They understand that to build an equitable economy, we must not be afraid to tax rich corporations and individuals to fund social programs that will help millions of families.

Thank you,

Leigh Kathryn Shelton