

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

I am a 60 year old woman who has raised 6 sons. I have been caring for my mother in my home for over 8 years. She has late stage Alzheimer's Disease. I am in fact the definition of a lifetime Caregiver. I am a certified teacher for K-8 here in Oregon and spent 10 years as an English Instructor in Texas. I have a BA degree in Education with a minor in Fine Arts and Spanish. I know that Caregiving from the perspective of my union SEIU, was considered a Domestic Servant just a mere 20 years ago. I am unwilling to support any legislation or legislator who is able to deny that truth or attempt to be on the slippery slope of returning to the dark ages.

The following is a list of experiences that impeded my ability to care for my 6 sons during their formative years when I needed support.

- Fear of utilizing ERDC due to the non-transparent manner in which it is administered.
- Shame to use a public program.
- Caseworkers treated me as if I was not deserving which caused me fear.
- Due to being a low-income mother with an education and while I was aware of my basic knowledge of the system yet I was still fearful of being billed suddenly for extremely high childcare costs thus I took matters into my own hands and found a position that allowed me to manage apartment complexes but caused me to be low-income.
- Inadequate Childcare placement available that met the individual needs of my sons.
- The end result is that I am now approaching "retirement age" with nothing but Social Security.

That is why I am in full support of prioritizing childcare this legislation session, which includes HB 3073.

When I now consider all of these factors I see clearly now that not only were my children's needs, my needs but also any other low income mother/parent who was unable to break through the income barrier threshold of being poor into the realm of middle class income and thus held back from opportunities that other citizens of higher incomes had and continue to have. We need more opportunities and better programs that seek to build a person up and to be the cause of freely acquiring safe, affordable, transparent Caregiving programs that are real and tangible for all families in Oregon. I urge you to support HB 3073.

In Solidarity,

Jan Montes
Low income Caregiver