



May 6, 2021

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Vice Chairs Drazan and Holvey and members of the House Rules Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2166 and the -6 Amendments. This is an important bill to help ensure that Oregon's children have inclusive spaces to support their needs and give them the foundation they need to be successful in their lives. We appreciate that -6 amendments keeps families at the center of their children's lives and also includes resources to support providers while keeping kids in placement. All of these are important to change the future for kids of color and those who may be experiencing developmental delays so they learn from the beginning that they matter, they have opportunities, and can be successful.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents licensed in-home child care providers as well as teachers and/or staff in some of Oregon's Head Starts. We appreciate that our partners in the early learning community, ELD and Governor's staff heard our concerns about making sure that our child care and early learning workforce have the resources and supports they need to work with children and families that may have additional needs. I'd like to share a story about the impact on providers, children, and parents if we are not able to adequately resource needed supports:

Autumn, a Preschool Promise provider, had a child in her program that was facing challenges and demonstrating behaviors that needed intervention and additional supports. The child was from a single parent household where Mom was doing her best to work things out and get help on her end and be a good partner in problem solving. However, the limited resources available to her plus her limited time and financial capacity - proved to be constraints on those efforts.

Autumn worked with the county early intervention services to make sure they were doing all they could to support the child. It was decided that the child needed one- on- one support but the resources for an additional staff person for the child were not available. To be able to provide the level of care the child needed, Autumn would have had to find a person with the right level of training and pay for them out of her existing budget. Charging the parent wasn't an option



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because she could not afford such a cost and the point of Preschool Promise is free or reduced cost preschool for families.

What to do weighed heavily on Autumn. She knew that not being able to provide the one-on-one support for the child complicated her ability to meet all of her licensing requirements. She knew that telling a child that they are not allowed to stay at her preschool would hurt the child, and could set them up for lifelong stigma that can follow kids who have been told early in life that they don't belong. She also knew that Mom needed the care for her child so that she could work, and that finding new child care would be next to impossible. Eventually, Autumn, after trying every possible option to keep the child, was forced to recommend an alternative placement for that child. It was a heart wrenching for both her and the family.

As mentioned, we appreciated that the -6 amendments are inclusive of needed supports to providers. The explanation under "How does a provider access supports in the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Program in HB 2166-6" from the Governor's staff outlines what that would look like, but it lacks one thing that could make all the difference for a child, family and provider. That process is what Autumn went through when trying to support the child and the parent in her program. To be truly inclusive and supportive the box stating "Additional classroom visits to support implementing new strategies" should read "Additional classroom visits and/or staffing to support implementing new strategies". Of course, saying it in statute is only one piece. We'll need funding to support that work but this is the first step in moving forward.

Oregon AFSCME looks forward to continuing this important work in making sure our children have what they need to be successful in early learning, school and throughout their lives. We urge your support and passage of the HB 2166 -6 amendments.