



Testimony in Support of HB 2503 & HB 3073
Gloria Sandoval, Unite Oregon
February 22, 2021

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bills 2503 and 3073. My name is Gloria Sandoval and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Unite Oregon. Our organization is led by people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty, as we work across Oregon to build a unified intercultural movement for justice.

We are writing to offer support for House Bills 2503 and 3073 because the child care crisis that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic is now a state of emergency— for women, and BIPOC women in particular. In December 2020, all jobs lost in the United States were women’s jobs, with women losing a net 156,000 jobs and men gaining a net 16,000. The COVID impacts of job loss hit Black and Latinx women more aggressively: between January and December 2020, nearly 2.1 million women left the labor force, including 564,000 Black women and 317,000 Latinas.¹ In addition, about 2 in 5 unemployed women had been out of work for 6 months or longer, including about 41% of Black women, 38% of Latinas, and 44% of Asian women. With BIPOC women losing jobs at record numbers, the need for affordable child care is rising simultaneously. If we don’t act now, we are facing decades of setbacks for women’s economic security with the largest burden placed on women who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or other people of color (BIPOC).²

Despite how prohibitively expensive child care is for parents, child care providers (who are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color) are also struggling to make ends meet. They are among the lowest-paid workers in Oregon, making half the all-industry Oregon average.³ In 2018, the median wage of preschool teachers, many of whom are college-educated, was \$13.95 an hour, and was \$11.86 for child care workers in Oregon. This year has made even clearer how essential child care is—it is essential work that makes all other work possible—and yet, we don’t compensate providers accordingly.

¹ <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/December-Jobs-Day.pdf>

² <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/December-Jobs-Day.pdf>

³ <https://familyforwardoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FFO-Child-Care-Report-2019-REV.pdf>

Child care is necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy. As a state, we risk leaving women, particularly BIPOC women, behind in economic recovery if we do not address the child care crisis. In the meantime, we can start with House Bills 3073 and 2503, which will reform the ERDC into a child care assistance program that better serves low-income and BIPOC families, as well as providing fair compensation for the child care business owners and educators—predominantly women and BIPOC women—who perform this critical work. Unite Oregon urges your support for these important bills.

Sincerely,

Gloria Sandoval
Unite Oregon