

February 15th, 2021

To: The House Early Childhood Committee

From: Kerala Taylor

Re: Support of HB 2503 and HB 3073

Dear Chair Karin Power and Vice-Chairs Lisa Renyolds & Jack Zika,

My name is Kerala Taylor and I live in Portland, OR. When my husband and I met 16 years ago, he did not have a high school diploma. He was going to school to become an EMT, then became a paramedic, then pursued a bachelor's degree, and two years ago, he received his doctorate degree in Occupational Therapy. During that time, we've had two children, and I served as the primary or sole income provider for my family. The constant juggle of finding childcare for two children that attained that perfect trifecta of convenient, high-quality, and affordable was nearly impossible. It might be high-quality, but not affordable; it might be affordable, but it doesn't open early enough to be viable; it might be convenient, but not high-quality. Or it might attain all three, but not have any available openings. It has been left to working parents, particularly mothers, to shoulder the financial and emotional burden of a broken system that devalues our childcare providers, our children, and our families.

The pure exhaustion and constant financial stress caused by our piecemeal, expensive, and inaccessible childcare system has diminished so much of the joy I would have otherwise felt as a mother of young children. It's time for our government and for the business community to recognize that a government-funded childcare infrastructure would benefit not just working parents, but also the childcare providers who struggle to stay financially afloat while providing essential services that are the backbone of our economy.

Sincerely,
Kerala Taylor