

Testimony
Oregon State House Early Childhood Committee
HB 2503 – Eligibility for Childcare Subsidy
February 22, 2021
Capitol Building, Salem, OR

Participant for the record:

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Chair Power, Vice Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Zika, Representative Lively, Representative Neron, Representative Schouten, Representative Weber, and Representative Wright, my name is Martha Brooks. I am the State Director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and ReadyNation, a bipartisan, non-profit organization of senior law enforcement and business leaders with over 200 members in Oregon. I am writing to express our support of HB 2503 that will expand the eligibility of child care for many of our most at need Oregon families. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and ReadyNation are committed to programs that help kids get the best start in life. This bill offers a way to expand and improve worthwhile family supports that will do just that – gets kids start on the best path.

We support HB 2503 as it will:

- Ensure affordability for parents by capping co-pays at no more than 7% of family income
- Expand eligibility of children regardless of their documentation status
- Expand childcare flexibility to allow access to include more than just working hours
- Make sure that children and families have access to stable care by extending eligibility for a minimum of 12 months
- Insure financial stability to providers by making payment on enrollment and not attendance
- Protect Oregon's current investments to childcare through Employment Related Day Care

Quality childhood programs also save money, with recent estimates showing a return on investment of approximately \$25,000 per child served. When we support parents seeking consistent, high-quality child care, we are ensuring the success and safety of the greater community. It would ensure the state gets the best return on its investment.

All of the proposed changes in HB 2503 move Oregon to a higher quality of childcare. **Fight Crime: Invest in Kids and ReadyNation strongly urge you to support and pass HB 2503.** Now is the time to make these changes so that Oregon's childcare system is more integrated and will provide the high quality care our children and families need. HB 2503 will also go a long way in establishing a workforce that will can and should be paid the wages and income that they deserve for the job they do.