



February 22, 2021

Chair Karin Power
Vice-Chair Lisa Reynolds
Vice-Chair Jack Zika
Members of the Senate Education Committee

RE: HB 2503 / SB 239 – Expands eligibility for certain child care subsidy programs

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support expanding eligibility for child care subsidy programs. My name is Elona J Wilson, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), an alliance of [culturally specific community-based organizations](#) with representation from African, African American, Latinx, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic communities in Oregon.

The Coalition of Communities of Color’s mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

“How are the children?” is a common greeting in some African countries because child well-being is a good measure of community well-being. If we measure our community on the wellness of our children in Oregon, we are not well. Under the current system, child care is primarily funded by families that cannot afford the true costs associated with quality care for children, such as living wages or enrichment activities. While parents are unable to afford care, child care providers are not charging enough to cover the costs to provide care, often subsidizing a lack of public investment in the system with their low wages. The current funding structure is unsustainable and as a result, every county in Oregon is a child care desert for at least one age group of children.





This is not new; we had a child care crisis before COVID, and this pandemic is revealing how significant that problem has always been. The crisis is worse now, with 50 percent of Oregon's pre-COVID child care slots gone. And 40 percent of providers are closed, unlikely to ever reopen. The provisions in this bill is an important first step in addressing these issues. This is why we must act now.

HB 2503 and SB 239 will ensure affordability for parents by capping copays to no more than 7 percent of the family's income, expand access to all children, protect eligibility for children, increase the flexibility of the program, protect our current investments and have countless other positive outcomes in our communities. Our children, families and providers deserve to be invested in, and that is why we support the passage of this legislation.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to take action to make child care accessible by supporting HB 227. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2503 and SB 239.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elona J. Wilson".

Elona J Wilson
Advocacy Director
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