

I am Irene Barajas, a state licensed childcare provider in Tillamook for 7+ years.

While there are positives in this bill and I support it in general, there are many things about HB 2166 that are also very concerning to me. Please do not allow any amendments to the bill that would be harmful to family childcare providers, children, and families, such as instituting a ban on suspensions/expulsions. I cannot imagine being forced to keep a child in my care who has behavioral problems that I am not able to work with, let alone ones that could be dangerous to themselves, myself, my own children, and/or other children I take care of. Also, childcare insurance companies would be very unlikely to provide coverage to a business that is forced to keep a "liability", as they'd undoubtedly see it, and losing that insurance would put providers in a horribly vulnerable spot, legally and financially. Many providers would close their doors based on that alone! It'd be a deterrent to new providers, too. It'd make OR's childcare "desert" even more dire than it already is.

I, like many family childcare providers, am the sole adult the majority of the time I am caring for children. It is already plenty of work to juggle meeting the needs of an infant or two, a handful of preschoolers, and also a couple school aged kids all at once who have typical behavior, let alone if one or more of them have behavioral/learning challenges. If I had even one child in my care who had severe behaviors that put the others (or themselves) in harm's way (chronic biting, hitting, self-harm, throwing, or other general destructive & interruptive actions, etc), it would greatly limit my ability to properly care for the other children and have positive, productive, safe environment. I am an experienced, educated childcare provider, but even I could not manage that on my own effectively!

Most family childcare providers do not have the support needed to work with children who have severe behavioral issues. There are agencies who are supposed to be available to us, but they are generally understaffed and not able to support us as they are advertised to be. Unfortunately, it is also all too common for parents to gloss over or even flat out lie about their children's behaviors. That combination means sometimes we end up with children who we are not able to help in the ways they need, no matter how much we may want to.

Having a bill in place that would remove my ability to protect myself/staff/other children by not being able to suspend or expel a child who is a danger to others or who has challenges I am not able to handle on my own is horrifying.

I truly feel that if that part of the bill passed, it would result in childcare providers either A- closing their doors, B-end up severely limiting the children they would even consider providing care for, and definitely C- losing families who would inevitably voluntarily leave because their childcare provider has to keep a child who is either a danger to their own or creates an environment that is no longer positive. None of those outcomes are ok; none of them help childcare providers or families or children.

Parents, children, & childcare providers and even schools need more education and supports in place to help with behavior issues. That is very clear, and widely felt and known. This bill does nothing to help any of us in that way. It places childcare providers in a place where we are the ones solely accountable for the behaviors, and the ones who are punished, either via losing clients and having an unsafe, stressful, or even hostile environment, or so far as losing our licenses if we do stand up for ourselves and the kids in our care by ending care for a child with severe behavior challenges. It isn't fair to lay that on us! We love our families, love our kids, and want the best for all of them!

**PLEASE do not pass this bill as it is written. It will be hugely detrimental to Oregon's childcare providers and families!**