

Testimony in Support of HB 4005
February 2, 2022

Dear Chair Power, Vice Chairs Reynolds and Zika, and members of the House Committee on Early Childhood:

My name is Rachael Lamet and I am a family childcare provider. I am the owner of Lamet's Treasures here in the Salem area. I first moved to Oregon in order to support my husband. At the time, I started taking care of some friends' kids in order to temporarily help them out, but then I realized how much I missed working with children. My own kids were all grown, so I decided to become licensed and care for children in my home.

I have put a lot of work into making sure I provide high-quality care to families in my area. We have a low adult-to-child ratio, which allows us to better fit the needs of each individual child. We serve organic foods in our program. We work with the parents to keep them engaged, working together to meet their families' needs. We also follow an approved and researched play-based learning curriculum that helps children learn and grow when they are in our care.

At this moment I have one employee. Unfortunately costs have gone up so much that I am going to have to let her go and I can no longer afford her support. There are many qualified people that are interested in working for me and supporting our program, I just can't afford anyone.

Our program provides needed care for parents in our community, including essential state workers. I offer flexibility and will work with individuals based on their needs, if it fits in my schedule. But because of ELD regulations and rules, it is difficult to make too many accommodations. There are so many parents that are needing child care right now. I receive about five phone calls a day requesting care and I am not even advertising.

It is difficult financially to be a child care provider. I could make twice as much working in a fast food restaurant. If my husband didn't pay the bills, I would not be able to operate. I have a degree in Human Resources and Business Management, along with 15 plus years in management and HR. I have come close to shutting my doors many times, and if it were not for the relationships that I have with my families, I would have. I am frustrated about the large amounts of grant money that was given to large centers compared to what was given to smaller, more flexible programs, like mine and many others, that work together with parents to meet their needs.

I want to stay a provider because I like helping but I don't have a lot of money to help everyone and the cost for pandemic-related expenses to stay open has been huge. I would love to be able to get bigger so I could actually hire people, train them, and help more families, but I already feel like I'm drowning sometimes in keeping up with all the new expenses and costs of providing care. On top of that, when it comes to expanding, I can't afford a new sprinkler system and my home is too small to have more kids at this time. Having additional help, like the ones in HB 4005, would be beneficial to programs like mine and would help keep us afloat.

Thank you,

Rachael Lamet