

Submitter: Angie Garcia  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood  
Measure: HB4005

My name is Angie Garcia and I live and work in Portland Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to share my experiences with you today. I own 2 centers in Portland, currently serving approximately 60 families. Pre-pandemic, I was serving over 100 families.

The pandemic has been incredibly hard on the child care industry. As a provider, working with families for more than 18 years, I am ready to open an additional site yet there are a number of barriers preventing that. As a result, not only is my business limited but more importantly we as a state are unable to build a suitable child care supply. With HB 4005, you have the opportunity to address several of these challenges:

Current ERDC rates do not cover the current market rate, which is even lower than the true cost of care. In order for families to attend our program, I have to write off the portion they cannot afford, again resulting in losing much needed revenue.

Attracting teachers to this field is hard due to the instability of the industry including low wages, unsustainable work schedules, and lack of a well thought system of shared services. This makes it difficult for any teacher attracted to this work to remain in this work.

There are not enough spaces that are suitable for early childhood programs.

It is expensive. Creating early childhood spaces is costly and often takes considerable time that most providers just don't have.

Delays in ERDC payments. Sometimes we must wait as many as 90 days to receive payment, making it hard for centers like mine to pay our bills.

The current pandemic has been particularly hard on child care providers. Having a system of care that is reliant on an individual family's ability to pay makes us vulnerable. What should concern us all is that we have not yet felt the full impact of all of the shuttered centers and family providers. I am fielding over a dozen new prospective families a week. Our waitlist has over 250 families and continues to grow weekly. We simply are not able to fill the need for child care in our community. As a result, higher-income families, who can afford to pay for their spots on their own, are most likely to access the limited child care that is available. Centers like mine will take the money, because we desperately need it to survive. Calling into question, once again, the equity of our system.

Please pass HB 4005. Our families and our workforce depend on it.

Thank you,  
Angie Garcia  
Portland, OR