



GREATER PORTLAND INC
111 SW COLUMBIA ST, #1170, PORTLAND, OR 97201
GREATERPORTLANDINC.COM
503-445-8065

**Testimony in Support of HB 4005
Greater Portland Inc
February 3, 2022**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4005. My name is Monique Claiborne and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Greater Portland Inc, our region's bi-state economic development organization.

We are writing to offer support for House Bill 4005 because we know that access to child care is necessary for families and the economy to thrive. The pandemic has made clear that without care work, no other work can happen. Child care provides the necessary infrastructure for Oregon's essential workforce to continue to work, and we have seen the devastating impact on employment when parents could not find child care, especially for mothers.

In October 2020, our sister organization, Greater Portland Economic Development District, adopted a [regional economic recovery strategy](#). This body of work represents an action-focused, outcome-oriented plan that responds to the businesses and individuals most severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Support for child care providers was elevated as a top priority in this plan because employees have insurmountable child care responsibilities. Child care providers urgently need financial support to continue operations to remain a critical component of our economic development infrastructure.

Seeing that working parents account for 31% of our labor force¹, we need to address these shortcomings now. If a third of our state cannot consistently and reliably show up to work, we cannot remain competitive in economic development.

Child care providers need additional support that rectifies the decades of financial scarcity they have experienced. This support should invest in building more child care supply, better compensate our providers and educators, and grow the capacity of the new Department of Early Learning and Care. HB 4005 will:

- Support providers and child care affordability for subsidy-eligible families by increasing subsidy rates to the 90th percentile of the 2020 child care market rate.
- Support Oregon's child care systems development through HB 3073 implementation with increased capacity to stand up the new Department of Early Learning and Care.

¹[https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/for-oregon-parents-working-is-the-norm#:~:text=How%20much%20of%20the%20workforce,to%20the%20nation%20\(33%25\)](https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/for-oregon-parents-working-is-the-norm#:~:text=How%20much%20of%20the%20workforce,to%20the%20nation%20(33%25).).

- Delay fire code requirements on in-home child care providers to prioritize building new provider capacity while still keeping kids safe.

Additionally, we support increasing child care slots through investing in new provider grants, strengthening our state's Child Care Resource & Referral Centers, and direct relief payments to the child care workforce. Without investing in new providers and helping existing providers expand, we are unable to meet current demands and will be even further behind when implementing new state, and likely federal, expanded eligibility to child care subsidies.

Every Oregon family deserves access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care, and every child care provider should be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do. Greater Portland Inc urges your support for HB 4005.

Sincerely,

Monique Claiborne
President & CEO
Greater Portland Inc