

Submitter: Emily A

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Measure: SB1591

Dear Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Robinson, and members of the committee, Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1591. My name is Emily, I live in Manzanita and I am a parent of two young boys, aged 3 and 6. I'm writing to support SB 1591 because I know that access to child care is urgently necessary for families, for children, and for the economy.

As a resident of Oregon's North Coast, lack of available childcare options for our preschool-aged son has been one of the greatest barriers to both my husband's and my career, as well as our mental and emotional well-being. When our son turned two, I was ready to return to work, and our family was trying to build some financial stability through my husband's two--and sometimes three--jobs. I was eager to return to the workforce and be a financial contributor, and assumed that once I had a job, we would be able to patch together care for our son, even if it meant offsetting a large part of my income. We were able to gain the help of a middle-school student during the summer to watch our son, while my husband worked from home and I worked outside of the home. But once she returned to school, our options were limited and bordered on non-existent. The local preschool was full with a long waitlist. We secured a space in a local non-profit preschool (the only other option within any proximity to us) that would have only provided two mornings of care per week. With the influx of COVID cases in our community, we opted to co-op care with two other families who also had children my son's age, rather than expose our son to 15 other children for the benefit of only about 6 hours of childcare per week.

In order to make things work, I have been working full-time while also caring for four preschool-aged children in my home one morning per week, in order for my son to have care two other mornings per week. My husband has been working full-time from home while also watching our son on the other days. I try to work weekends whenever I can so that I can give my husband some space to work without our son during part of the week. We are tired. This situation is unsustainable. In reaching out to other mom's in my community, the story is so often the same. Many started work again after having children and had to leave their jobs because they didn't have childcare. We need childcare. But here we are. I can't afford to lose my job, but I don't know if I can afford to keep it either.

I hope that you will help remove unnecessary restrictions to childcare at a time that it is needed the most and that you will support Oregon's registered in-home child care providers by allowing leeway to increase capacity in Oregon's in-home registered Childcare centers during a time of unprecedented need. Our State and our families

can't afford to wait. We need this now. SB 1591 is a win-win for working families and working parents and childcare providers who struggle to stay financially afloat while providing essential services that are the backbone of our economy. Please support SB 1591 to remove unnecessary barriers to providing the childcare we so desperately need.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Emily