



Child Care That Works. For Every Family.

To: House Committee on Early Childhood & Human Services

From: Child Care for Oregon

Date: January 23, 2023

RE: In Support of HB 2727 & HB 3005

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, members of the committee:

My name is Danita Harris, I am the Deputy Director of Movement Building with Imagine Black Futures, a community driven organization envisioning a world where people of African descent enjoy the rights, resources, and recognition to be a thriving, resilient, and connected community. However, today I am here representing the Child Care for Oregon Coalition, a coalition of nonprofit organizations, labor unions, community advocates, parents, caregivers and providers working to build a comprehensive early learning and child care system in Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support for House Bills 2727 and 3005.

Our entire economy is dependent on equitable access to child care. Like roads and bridges, affordable, high-quality child care is necessary infrastructure. Parents need affordable child care that provides a peace of mind that their children are learning and loved. Employers need their employees to have access to reliable, affordable child care so they can return to work. And our future workforce demands must ensure that all children have access to child care environments that stimulate development and get kids ready to learn in K-12.

We've seen the impacts of how the lack of investment and infrastructure in these critical systems has led to massive economic inequality for the disproportionately women of color who work in this field, and the long-term negative impacts we've seen on women's workforce participation and economic security. While our state has made significant strides in the last few years in addressing the child care crisis, we still have much work to do. One of the areas demanding urgent attention is the lack of suitable physical infrastructure for early learning and child care. This is why the Child Care for Oregon Coalition is in strong support of both HB 2727 and 3005.

HB 2727 will create a taskforce to look at the impact of land use zoning, building codes, and permitting processes on the expansion of early childhood facilities, including disproportionate impacts. The taskforce could provide a blueprint for cities, counties, and state agencies to improve processes to support the expansion of early childhood facilities, breaking down current barriers and roadblocks providers face in opening new facilities, and easing future development of critical child care infrastructure.

HB 3005 creates an Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund to finance early learning and child care facilities, including a 25% minimum allocation to culturally specific organizations and programs and a 25% maximum for school districts. As mentioned earlier, we had insufficient child care supply before the pandemic and that problem has only been exacerbated. Without investing in new facilities and helping existing providers and programs expand, we will be unable to meet the demands for early learning and child care.

Without continued attention and investment in child care infrastructure, such as HB 2727 and HB 3005, this crisis will have a profound economic impact on those who are already financially vulnerable: the disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color who make up the child care workforce, rural communities, and low-income and families of color who struggle to access the quality care they need. The Child Care for Oregon coalition looks forward to working with you to continue to elevate early learning and care as an important piece of Oregon's educational, care, and economic infrastructure and we strongly urge your support for House Bills 2727 and 3005.

