



Testimony in Support of HB 2504, 2991, and 3029

Marisol De La Torre, Unite Oregon

February 20, 2023

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bills 2504, 2991, and 3029. My name is Marisol De La Torre and I am a Policy Coordinator at Unite Oregon. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our 46,000 members statewide. Our organization is led by Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural communities, and people experiencing poverty.

This year Unite Oregon launched a state-wide child care business program for community members who have or are interested in starting a childcare business. This program will provide community members education on how to launch and operate a childcare business. Our organization recognizes that investing in child care infrastructure is necessary to the success and well-being of the communities we serve.

Black, Indigenous, and people of color are the most impacted and least served when it comes to child care policy. The lack of public investment in a comprehensive child care system is a systemic problem rooted in racism, sexism, and the country's history of exploiting our care labor. Despite how prohibitively expensive child care is for parents, child care providers—who are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color—are among the lowest-paid workers in Oregon.

Almost 20 years ago, my mother quit her job to care for my three siblings and me because her income was almost equivalent to what she had to pay for our childcare. She later became an at-home childcare provider. When she first began caregiving she charged \$1 per child per hour. After obtaining a Children's Care License from the state of Oregon, she increased her rate to \$2.50 per child per hour. Even at a young age, I noticed how physically and emotionally taxing the labor was. Childcare providers have an immense responsibility yet their compensation is insulting. Their work is essential to our economy as it makes all other work possible.

In addition to providing financial support to child care providers with HB 3029, HBs 2504 and 2991 will help address disparities in access to culturally and linguistically responsive care. This is important because nationally, around 22% of children ages



5 to 17 speak a language other than English at home.¹ Taking steps to grow a child care workforce that reflects the linguistic diversity of children and their families is critical to building the child care system we need.

Every family deserves access to high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care. Oregon must prioritize the needs of childcare providers and families, without them, there will be no economic recovery. Unite Oregon asks you to support our membership by voting yes to move this child care package out of committee.

Thank you,

Marisol De La Torre

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Policy Coordinator, Unite Oregon

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<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/81-children-who-speak-a-language-other-than-english-at-home#detailed/1/any/false/2048.1729.37.871.870.573.869.36.868.867/any/396.397>