

Submitter: Alisa Kajikawa

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2991

February 21, 2023

To: House Committee on Early Childhood & Human Services

From: Alisa Kajikawa, Portland, OR (Multnomah County)

Re: Child Care House Bills 2504, 2991, and 3029

Email: alisa.kajikawa@gmail.com

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Nyugen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bills 2504, 2991 and 3026. My name is Alisa Kajikawa, and I live in Portland, OR.

I am not a parent or childcare provider. However, I have worked with immigrant and refugee families for many years, and have seen the challenges and barriers that come with not having a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce, and lack of options in general. Many individuals, especially women, who are part of immigrant and refugee communities are already taking care of their children along with their family members' and friends' children. HB2991 and HB3029 would help support many women become licensed childcare providers who are already doing the work for free. HB2504 would help families feel better connected and cared for by childcare providers who can speak their language and understand their culture.

Creating more equitable pathways for individuals from underrepresented communities to become childcare providers will also allow families to pursue jobs, careers, and education opportunities they might otherwise not be able to due to lack of childcare.

I'm writing in support of these bills because I know that access to child care is necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy. The pandemic has made clear that without care work, no other work can happen. Childcare should be a top priority for lawmakers to address this legislative session.

Our state cannot afford to not invest in child care and this important workforce. Providers should be properly compensated for their work, and families should have access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally relevant childcare. Please support and invest in child care with HBs 2504, 2991, and 3029.

Parents need the peace of mind that their providers have the support and resources

to provide care, and providers need accessible, equitable workforce pathways and increased compensation and support. I urge you to pass HBs 2504, 2991, and 3029 to take these necessary steps our child care system needs.

It's time for the Legislature to recognize that a government-funded childcare infrastructure would benefit not just working parents, but also the childcare providers who struggle to stay financially afloat while providing essential services that are the backbone of our economy. Please support HBs 2504, 2991, and 3029.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Alisa Kajikawa