

Good Afternoon, Chair Reynolds and Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

My name is Barbara Santiago. I live in Creswell, OR and work at Relief Nursery In. as Deputy Director of Early Childhood Programs.

I support House Bill 2504.

I started working at Relief Nursery in February 2011; some of the requirements for teacher/home visitors were Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, social work or the educational field. My educational background is exactly that. I graduated from la "Escuela Normal para Educadoras de Guadalajara Jalisco México" and was very fortunate that Relief Nursery gave me a job opportunity.

The workforce registry, ORO, has been one of the biggest challenges in my professional development. I applied to the registry and sent in the required documentation in 2011. By 2013 I was still struggling with a list of additional requirements they had given in order to get my transcripts accepted. I followed the directions I was given by ORO to get my documentation officially translated and spent more than 500 dollars, re-sent all my information along with my application, only to find out two years later I was still unable to get my bachelor's degree accepted.

I felt so discouraged after trying to have my degree accepted for so long that I started to look for other options to become qualified according to ORO. I decided to enroll at Lane Community College. I went back to school to study for the second time, my same degree, taking classes in the evening after working all day. In 2016, I was finally able to increase my qualifications in the registry after completing my studies at Lane Community College. During the time I was studying at Lane, I was not much present for my family – I had three little girls at home. During the day, I was working to support my family, during the nights I went to school, and worked on school projects.

Now that years have passed and I have grown professionally at Relief Nursery, I can see nothing has changed with the registry system, the challenges and struggles have not been reviewed or improved and I see that many other applicants that like me find themselves struggling to be able to meet requirements of the work force. I know and understand how difficult for both employee and employer it is to face this challenging registry system. I am here today to ask for your vote in favor of house bill 2405 to eliminate the barriers and challenges in the early childhood work force registry.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today.