



EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

T O : Co-Chair Senator Lew Frederick
Co-Chair Representative Susan McLain
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means –
Subcommittee on Education

F R O M : Sue Miller, Chair, Early Learning Council

D A T E : March 2, 2023

R E : Testimony supporting proposed budget for the Department of Early Learning and Care in HB 5013

SUE MILLER
Chair

ANDREA BELL
*Executive Director,
Oregon Housing and
Community Services*

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KATY BROOKS

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*Interim Director, Oregon
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*Deputy Director, Oregon
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Staff
Remy Watts, *Early
Learning Council
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The Legislature has charged the Early Learning Council with coordinating a unified and aligned system of early learning grounded in the science of child development and equity to assure that our young children enter school ready to learn and that all families are healthy, stable and attached. With significant public input, the Council developed a five-year early learning system strategic plan [Raise Up Oregon](#) in 2019, and we are in the process of updating it as we speak.

A unique feature of our strategic plan and the Early Learning Council is our work across multiple state agencies with six agency directors serving as ex-officio members of the Council: the Department of Education, the Health Authority, the Department of Human Services, Housing and Community Services, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and the Early Learning Division/Department of Early Learning and Care.

The creation of the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) will make early childhood an equal partner with the other agencies while pressing a strong focus on prenatal to age five programs and investments. The creation of DELIC was the Council's number one legislative priority in past years, and we agree with co-chair Frederick that it is exciting to see HB 5013 bringing this to fruition.

The proposed budget for DELIC is consistent with the Council's priorities and the overall Raise Up Oregon strategic plan. I especially want to note the benefits of more resources for the following:

- 1) A total of \$62.5 million that will support our early care and education workforce through rate enhancements for critical programs of Oregon PreK, Preschool Promise, Healthy Families Oregon, Early Childhood Equity Fund and Relief Nurseries.
- 2) A total of \$41.3 million for Employment Related Day Care enhancements including rate enhancements. This is critical as the child care workforce remains less than what it was before the pandemic, and we know that many women are not yet able to return to work due to lack of child care.
- 3) A total of \$100 million to address facilities needs for early childhood providers.
- 4) Additional staffing for DELIC. This is as critical an infrastructure investment as is proposed for DELIC's core program initiatives and the new facilities fund. DELIC can only succeed as a standalone agency if it has enough staff capacity to plan, implement, and monitor its work.



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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and to allow me to express our support for the proposed budget enhancements for early care and learning that are found in the proposed budget for DELC. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Oregon's commitment to the early care and education of young children and their families and your leadership commitment.

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