

April 8, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
From: Laura Hadden, Portland, OR
Re: April W+M Roadshow: Child Care Funding

Co-Chairs Senator Steiner and Rep Sanchez, Members of the Committee:

My name is Laura Hadden and I live in Portland, OR.

I am writing to urge you to prioritize funding for childcare in the state budget because the current situation is hurting kids, families, and providers.

As the working mom of two small kids, I know firsthand how stressful securing childcare can be in Oregon. I began putting my first child on wait lists while I was still in the first trimester of pregnancy (before I was even telling my friends!) and still struggled to find a solution that would meet my family's needs before my daughter was born. Although I live in densely populated Northeast Portland, I ended up spending nearly an hour every day transporting her to and from care simply because I couldn't find openings for quality care closer to our home. There are simply not enough facilities to support the needs of our community.

I was also shocked to discover, despite spending over \$20,000 on childcare, how little the hardworking educators who cared for my kids were getting paid (an amount that was actually better than most other centers). A system in which parents are paying a significant portion of their salaries for childcare and yet childcare workers are not paid a living wage is fundamentally broken.

I chose to raise a family in Oregon because I love it here, but it's time for Oregon to love its families back through expanding affordable childcare access for all. Child care is the work that makes all other work possible. Our state needs to recognize this and fund it. Please prioritize child care in the budget.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Hadden