

Submitter: Megan McMillan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

April 8, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
From: Megan McMillan, Washington County
Re: Investment in child care
Email: megan.beth.mcmillan@gmail.com

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

My name is Megan McMillan and I live in Washington County. I am a mother to a 3 year-old son and a 7 year-old son who has special needs. The past few years have been filled with uncertainty in ways I could have never imagined, but no uncertainty was more troubling than whether I would have access to childcare. After enduring attempts to work at home full time while also teaching and caring for two very young children due to COVID-19, I can say with absolute certainty that childcare is the work that makes all other work possible!

Right now I'm one of the lucky ones. I am currently employed and I have childcare for both of my children that allows me to stay employed! For me--and so many other working families--access to childcare is a basic need. But in the childcare desert of the state of Oregon, there is no guarantee that we can find child care for our children. Forget affordability. Forget geographic convenience. Forget quality, or cultural competence or in-language care or qualified care for atypical children. There isn't enough child care of any sort available.

I'll note that available, affordable, and excellent childcare is not just a basic need for me, but a game changer for my son and all children with special needs. Any break in the continuity of care sets my son back in his development. The loss of a care setting and routine is extremely disruptive for a kid like my son, and for so many other children who are atypical. But with how unsustainable it is for childcare providers to operate, with the unnecessary barriers to credentialing and lack of financial support for child care workers, it is no wonder there aren't enough of them!

We must do better. We can do better! As a state, we can put money into a child care system that is equitable, affordable, high-quality, culturally appropriate, and also pays good wages and supports the essential workers who are providing care to our children. Please do everything in your power to make childcare more sustainable for

providers, and more accessible and available for every Oregonian. You can do this by investing in child care as you make budget decisions right now. Imagine the exhausted mother, lying awake at night worried about finding, keeping, or affording childcare. Imagine the would-be child care worker, committed to helping care for and educate our children, who can't navigate or can't afford the credentialing process, as you make your decisions. If you make their lives easier, not harder, with every decision you make, you're doing the right thing.

Thank you for paying attention to this critical issue and helping to meet our basic needs by investing in child care now.

Sincerely,
Megan McMillian