

Submitter: Amy Donohue
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

April 8, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
From: Amy Donohue, Portland, OR
Re: Investment in child care

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

As both a mother and an employer in Portland, I am sharing this testimony to let you know that funding for child care is an urgent priority for our state.

As a mother, I learned the hard way that child care is alarmingly expensive. I spent \$216,000 on child care for my two daughters over the course of their Pre-K years. This is a staggering amount of money! While I was fortunate to be able to afford this expense and ensure that my children were receiving excellent care while I was working, this is not the case for most parents in our state. Yet somehow the cost of child care has remained invisible to us as a society. This needs to change. We need to invest in child care as a state, and support working families with this basic need.

As an employer, I have seen how our lack of a funded, universal child care system hurts businesses and our workforce as a whole. I have seen mid-level employees step away from their careers when their second child is born, mostly due to the expense of childcare. The first child is a financial challenge, but the care for the second child completely breaks the budget for many, many families. Even those in well-paying professional careers. When these employees leave, our business loses their talent and experience - two critical components to our success as a business. Unlike other family benefits that we can afford for our employees (like flexible spending accounts or paid leave) we can not shoulder the expense of childcare for our employees.

The cost of childcare is restricting the number of people who can be part of the workforce. It is leaving families with impossible choices, and is especially harmful for women of color and their families. This is neither acceptable nor beneficial for Oregon. If we want an equitable child care system that supports all kinds of families at all income levels and also provides child care workers good wages and benefits,

we need publicly-funded, universal child care.

Please fund child care. We are depending on you.

Thank you.

Amy Donohue