

Emerson Levy
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
House District 53



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, members of the committee,

I am writing to share my strong support for HB 2504. I am proud to sponsor such crucial legislation that will address Oregon's early childcare workforce shortage.

There is a critical lack of childcare in Central Oregon. The lack of available service to families creates a burden on our community, our families, our hospital, and our small and big businesses. This barrier between caretakers and returning to the workforce is taking away opportunities for our families and economy to thrive. For every 10 children 0-2 years of age that need a spot, only 1 spot is available. For every 5 children 3+ years of age that need a spot, there is 1 available.

We need to use all the tools in our toolbox to increase childcare spots in Central Oregon and throughout the state of Oregon. Current registry processes prevent qualified workers from being hired into our childcare facilities, and with our early learning and childcare facilities facing such a workforce shortage, we need to be doing everything we can to reduce these barriers to work.

This bill ensures that the Department of Early Learning and Care will adopt new standards to simplify and eliminate inefficiencies within our early learning system in Oregon. Through establishing a new method to determine minimum qualifications for international professionals to enter the workforce, our services will be expanded while creating new opportunities for our community to enter this workforce. This bill will specifically reduce the barriers for international early childhood professionals from entering the workforce through the implementation of a system of professional development, which will provide the growing workforce with career pathways, mentorship, and coaching opportunities. Training requirements and minimum academic credentials will be established, and these standards and processes will be monitored and recorded, ensuring our children and families are getting the best care possible.

This is great legislation, and I urge your support.

Representative Emerson Levy
House District 53 - Central Oregon