

Submitter: Lisa Mutchler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: SB5506

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

I am writing today because childcare in Oregon is in crisis, and the parents, caregivers, and children of our state need you to prioritize this issue in our state budget.

As a parent to two young children, I am personally experiencing Oregon's childcare crisis. I had my first child in 2018, and when he was a year old, I reached out to a daycare in my neighborhood. I was told all classes had a waiting list, they would have no openings for his age group for an entire year, and the cost would be \$1200 per month. So our family has instead relied on a tricky patchwork of care from half-day preschools, drop-in centers, babysitters, and my parents. All of this takes significant effort to coordinate. We had our second child last year, and we will likely be in the same situation for the next four years unless significant investment is made into childcare infrastructure.

This status quo is simply not working for Oregon families. This was already the case before the pandemic, but it has now been made incredibly clear. Today, every single Oregonian lives in a childcare desert. Parents are reserving spots on daycare lists as soon as they find out they're pregnant and preparing to squeeze their budgets as tight as possible to fit in a daycare bill that rivals their rent or mortgage payment.

The market alone cannot fix this problem- we need the state to intervene with an actual plan to invest in a strong childcare system. Oregon has an opportunity to set an example for the rest of the country and be a leader in this area. Working families need this support and we need you to take action on it. Please prioritize childcare funding in this budget. Thank you.