

Submitter: Riley Haydon

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: SB5506

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

My name is Riley Hayden and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am writing to urge you to prioritize funding for childcare in the state budget. I am not a parent, but my partner and I are planning to become parents in the near future. We've been looking and planning for what it would be like to have a child and a major barrier is the accessibility of childcare. We both work full time, and most openings are for part-time care, with many not offering care five days a week, and the cost is still equal to that of our mortgage payment. Access and cost have impacted our family planning schedule, and has been a huge part in the conversation around how many kids we can have. We have seen first hand the impact the lack of available care has had on loved ones with children. The decisions they are forced to make between working and caring for their young ones. It's not lost on me that this is a generational issue. I think of how hard my grandparents had to work to provide for their children, often relying on family to take care of them while they worked and put themselves through school. While they gained education they and their children lost out on time spent together and family bonding that can only come from having the ability to give your children quality care. We are not in the same position where we can rely on family to help us care for our future children, our family is not close. They say it takes a village to raise a child but what about the families who don't have a village?

Families like mine, who want to have children are faced with conversations around who will get to keep working as our pay would be the same as the cost of child care? What will we do if we need extended care, or care for neurodivergent children? Childcare has to be prioritized in the upcoming budget because without it families cannot grow and thrive. I believe that childcare is not just a "parent issue", it's an everyone issue. Whether its families like mine who wish to have kids and are forced to navigate the harsh circumstances around access and affordability and weigh that against how many children we can have. I know many friends who have reached the conclusion that they cannot afford to have kids and childcare is one of the leading costs that is factored into their decision. People deserve to know that their children can and will be cared for in quality childcare settings. They deserve the piece of mind in knowing they can afford to plan a family, take care of their families, and feel stable. Access to childcare is not a parents only issue, it's a community health issue. I ask that you give families and providers the support they need and prioritize childcare in the budget.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Riley Hayden