

Submitter: Elizabeth Vazquez
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 Elizabeth Vazquez Mendoza, I have a 7-year-old son. Since my son was 2 and a half months old, I had the opportunity to work in a child care center. During that time, I was able to see and experience first hand that there were few people who could pay for their children's care by themselves, and that only people like nurses, and teachers could take their children to a child care center where they would be in an appropriate environment so that they could learn and be taken care of at the same time. In addition, as a teacher at the center I was also able to realize that when my salary was better it was when the center worked with government-funded programs. Because otherwise, nurseries face great economic challenges to meet their expenses, and staff salaries.

I was faced with a reality that many mothers face: the inability to find childcare close enough to my job that would allow me to continue my work. So I had to leave my job due to the lack of access to quality child care where my son could stay while I did my workday. I needed to work full time and have the peace of mind knowing that my son was in a safe place where he would learn and thrive.

I highly value my family and the well-being of my family members. Access to quality care would allow me to work and have peace of mind knowing that my child is in a safe place. Unfortunately there are not many spaces that help parents go to work knowing that our children are well cared for when the children are not in school. There really is a great need for accessible and safe child care centers or places for children to be while their parents work. I have heard that there is little to no money to invest in child care in the next budget. I disagree. Oregon has two savings accounts, we should use the money in these savings accounts and invest them in programs that will help Oregonians NOW. It should not have to be this hard for families to be able to go to work with the peace of mind that their children are safe. Having a fulfilling life without worrying about our basic needs should not have to be part of parenting life.

Our state cannot afford to NOT take action and invest as much as we can in child care. Providers should be properly compensated for their work, and families should have access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally relevant childcare. Please make child care a high priority as you make your budget decisions

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Vazquez Mendoza