



February 7, 2024

TO: Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

FR: Katie Koenig, Oregon Business & Industry

RE: Oregon Business and Industry's Support of HB 4158

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf and members of the committee,

Oregon Business & Industry (OBI) is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments in support of HB 4158. OBI members throughout the state cite lack of affordable child care options as one of their most significant workforce challenges. Addressing this shortage is complicated and will require various approaches.

Last session, the Legislature made significant investments through HB 3005, which established the Child Care Infrastructure Fund and allocated \$50 million in lottery bond funding. During implementation, in-home and small child care providers reported challenges accessing lottery bond funds due to logistical problems and high reporting and utilization requirements.

To address those challenges, HB 4158 would establish the Home and Small Center Child Care Fund and allocate \$5 million from the general fund. HB 4158 would create a less cumbersome avenue for in-home and small child care facilities to access funds.

Oregon employers and employees need creative, safe and affordable child care options, and this legislation is a good step in that direction.

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