



Re: Support for HB 4158, Child Care Facilities

February 7, 2024

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 4158 to provide crucial funding to Oregon's small child care centers and in-home providers. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Deputy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations. Our mission includes addressing the socioeconomic disparities experienced by individuals, families, and communities of color; and to engage in collective action for social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice, and prosperity.

Quality, accessible, and affordable child care is a necessity for Oregon's working families. The success of our economy depends on our state's ability to cultivate a successful child care system for all Oregonians. However, Oregon is facing a child care crisis in which thousands of families are unable to meet their needs in accessing child care. This is not new; we had a child care crisis before COVID, and the aftermath of the pandemic is revealing how significant that problem has always been. Every county in Oregon is a child care desert for at least one age group of children.

In 2023, the Legislature passed HB 3005 which created the Early Learning and Care Facilities Fund housed within Business Oregon and provided an initial allocation of \$50 million in lottery bond funding. This legislation would amend HB 3005 to create a Home-Based and Small Center Fund within the Child Care Infrastructure Fund, and allocate \$5 million to ensure that registered, certified, and small centers (defined as licensed to serve 75 or fewer children) have access to these critical child care infrastructure funds.

Small child care centers and in-home providers are the most likely to operate in rural areas, provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care, offer odd hour care (nights and weekends), as well as care to children with disabilities. This legislation is especially important to the families of color that CCC serves since they should have options for child care providers that offer an environment that is culturally and linguistically appropriate, comfortable, and effective, and this funding will help to uplift these options.

To comprehensively address the issue of Oregon's child care crisis, we must ensure that we build out child care infrastructure as a whole and invest in every type of child care service, including small centers and in-home providers.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to take action to make child care accessible by making an investment in the Home-based and Small Center Fund that will positively impact hundreds of Oregon families and children.

Thank you,
Jenny Lee, Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color