

Submitter: Michael Milch

On Behalf Of: Mayor and City Council

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction

Measure: HB5201

Co-Chairs Holvey and Girod and members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Milch, and I am the Mayor of Gladstone, a city of 12,000 residents in Clackamas County. I urge your support of the capital construction requests put forward by Clackamas County Children's Commission for acquisition and improvement of child care facilities in Gladstone and nearby communities.

Gladstone sits in the childcare desert of Clackamas County with only about 32% of preschool-age children—and only 20% of infants and toddlers—having access to any kind of regulated care.

With a shortage of over 3.5 million child care slots across 35 states, I am grateful for state and federal efforts to chip away at two major problems with US child care: unaffordability for parents and low wages for care workers. This session, we in Oregon have an opportunity to address a third challenge, one that has gotten far less attention but is quite literally at the sector's foundation: a lack of decent infrastructure.

Child care programs rarely generate enough revenue to cover the steep cost of securing and maintaining facilities. This drives down the low wages of workers while driving up the cost of tuition. It also means that to stay financially afloat, many programs do facility upkeep on a strictly as-needed basis.

The Gladstone YMCA on Webster Road in Gladstone has been sitting empty since 2020 when the pandemic hit, and it is an ideal location to expand childcare, especially infant and toddler care in our city. The site is already zoned for, and previously licensed for childcare, and the City is committed to expediting the permit process to enable Clackamas County Children's Commission to open a renovated Gladstone facility by year's end.

Using capital funds to expand, renovate, repair and weatherproof existing facilities is good stewardship of tax dollars and will slow the harmful effects caused by child care shortages for families, their employers, the economy and even the environment as parents add minutes and miles to their commutes for care.

Clackamas County Children's Commission has provided quality care in Clackamas County for over 50 years, and I urge you to support the capital construction requests

they have put forward by for childcare facilities in Gladstone and nearby communities. Thank you.