



Testimony for HB 3011

Chair Representative Zach Hudson,

I am pleased to provide testimony in support of HB 3011. It is an essential element to make affordable and/or universal paid childcare a reality to support our economy, families and the future of our state.

As an employer of an early childhood workforce of more than 30 staff and of many staff who are parents of young children we see every day the challenges the sector and those working in it face:

Workforce Development: Oregon is currently facing a significant childcare crisis, characterized by a shortage of accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare/early care and education options. During the last year our agency alone has seen several staff leave their positions as they could not secure affordable childcare for their infants and toddlers. This left us with holes that we could not all fill since, making it necessary to reduce services. Compounding this issue is the lack of a qualified workforce to support these essential services. This dual challenge impacts families, communities, and the broader economy, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive, systems-oriented solutions that address the root causes of the issues.

Addressing Shortages in the Sector - The Early Childhood Education (ECE) profession tends to be undervalued, marked by systemic under-recognition and low compensation. This is particularly stark in comparison to the K-3 workforce. As we know, most brain development happens in the 0-5 ages of a child and early childhood opportunities are essential for this development. The issues mentioned can deter students from pursuing papers and degrees in ECE, human development and family sciences, and related fields. Additionally, Oregon's universities and colleges offering these degree programs have faced significant budget cuts, further impacting the ECE workforce pipeline. HB 3011 addresses critical challenges in Oregon's ECE workforce by investing in publicly funded post-secondary ECE degree programs and campus ECE centers. These centers serve as learning labs for students pursuing ECE degrees, and related degrees such as special education, early intervention, psychology, and human physiology. Agencies like ours are also ready to work with the



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educational institutions to provide internships and other practical work experience. We already host interns regularly and are ready to expand this opportunity as we see it as a wonderful pipeline for future hiring.

Supporting Oregon's Economic Growth: As mentioned above, the profound lack of ECE capacity is an economic barrier holding our families and communities back. A qualified ECE workforce is essential for developing quality ECE capacity, which in turn supports economic growth. HB 3011 is crucial for building Oregon's ECE workforce. Investing in post-secondary education degrees and certificates directly contributes to a rising, qualified workforce in the early care and education sector that can confidently serve our community.

HB 3011 will build Oregon early childhood education workforce by making a \$20M investment in Oregon's public university and community college infrastructure. Funding would also support campus childcare centers that provide hands-on experience to students earning ECE degrees and educational programs based on the ECE degrees produced.

Your support for HB 3011 and the workforce development it provides will ensure a brighter future for Oregon's children and families and will help agencies like ours provide more quality early education services to more Oregon families.

Sincerely

Bettina Schempf
Executive Director