

To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
From: Child Care for Oregon
Date: February 11, 2025
RE: In Support of HB 3008

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, members of the committee:

As a child care worker of 2 number of years, I am writing to the committee today to express my strong support for HB 3008. I work in a small town called Pendleton OR. In one of the longest running daycares in Pendleton we just celebrated 25 year. Childcare is so needed but we struggle to get employees, children and money to help fund the things we do. This legislation has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of other child care workers such as myself, child care businesses, and the families we work with.

As a childcare worker, I know firsthand the hardships workers face in this industry. Low wages have made it difficult to make ends meet, and the lack of benefits forces us to decide whether we can continue in this line of work. It does not surprise me that there is such a significant gap in the childcare workforce; with low wages and little to no benefits, it is difficult to be able to support myself and my family. With little to no insurance benefits my husband has to pay 300\$ a week to support our family. In our daycare we have some of the longest running employee retention because we value our employees but it has come to the point we are no longer able to show them we value them. We have been barely making ends meet in the uncertain time we are going through.

House Bill 3008 helps us address these problems. By continuing to invest in the Child Care Recognition Payment Program and child care apprenticeship programs across the state, this legislation will support child care workers like myself by providing financial support during economic uncertainty, expanding pathways and hands-on training for those interested in the industry without having to take on debt, and supporting child care businesses that are struggling to recruit and retain workers. As a co director of a child center I have seen first hand how hard it is to retain employees and pay them a livable wage. Childcare workers are the people that care for your children day in and day out and spend almost more time with them than their own parents. They emotionally, mentally and physically go through so much on a daily basis. And have to go home and take care of their own children, spouses and family. This money not only is a help to staff and my business. But it helps me pay for the trainings that I pay for all of my staff so they are not having to pay out of their own pockets.

As a child care worker, I believe that HB 3008 aligns with my core values of promoting quality, affordability, and accessibility in child care. We cannot have these things without a strong, diverse, and supported workforce. By investing in the workforce, we can ensure that all workers are supported in their careers while providers like me are guaranteed high-quality workers to care for young Oregonians.

In conclusion, I urge you to support House Bill 3008. This legislation has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of Oregon child care workers like me. By investing in the workforce, we can ensure that all workers are supported in their careers while providers are guaranteed high-quality workers to care for young Oregonians.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Kunkle