

Submitter: Julie Heller
On Behalf Of: HB3008
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce
Development
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3008

Child Care Worker Testimony Template HB 3008

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 10 years, I am writing to the committee today to express my strong support for HB 3008. I live in Hermiston, Oregon, and work in nearby Boardman. Our small community faces big challenges when it comes to child care. As a preschool teacher, I see firsthand how crucial a strong and supported child care workforce is for families and the healthy development of our youngest learners. I'm passionate about ensuring that all children have access to quality care, and that the dedicated professionals who provide it are valued and supported. 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. For example, I've had to pick up extra shifts and even a second job just to cover basic expenses like rent and groceries. It's exhausting, and it takes away from the time I could be spending with my own family. I love working with children, but it's hard to stay in a profession where I'm constantly worried about finances.

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. I was fortunate enough to receive the Child Care Recognition Payment funds, and they were a tremendous help. That extra money allowed me to cover a much-needed car repair, which meant I could continue to get to work reliably. Without that assistance, I

would have been in a really tough spot. I believe the legislature should absolutely continue funding this program. It's a direct investment in the workforce, and it makes a real difference in our lives. Expanding child care apprenticeships across the state is also crucial. It offers a valuable alternative to traditional education, allowing aspiring child care workers to gain practical experience and earn while they learn. This kind of hands-on training is invaluable, and it can help attract more people to the field, especially those who might not be able to afford expensive college programs.

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,
Julie Heller