

COURTNEY NERON  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT 26



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Testimony in Support of [HB 3008](#)

February 11, 2025

Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development,

I write to you today to express my strong support for HB 3008, which makes **critical investments** in Oregon's child care workforce.

This workforce is a backbone of our economy, ensuring that families have access to reliable child care so parents can work and pursue education. However, **child care providers lack competitive wages, benefits, and a sustainable career pathway - which means we have a severe shortage of child care workers in our state:** According to the 2024 Oregon Talent Assessment, we have a **12.6% labor shortage** in childcare—the largest of any sector<sup>1</sup>.

HB 3008 directly addresses this workforce crisis by **investing in recruitment and retention payments for child care providers** through Portland State University's Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education. These payments recognize the essential role of child care providers and offers financial support to help retain workforce

Following the recommendations from [HB 2991 \(2023\)](#) – which directed DELC to study barriers to high quality early childhood workforce – this session's bill also supports existing apprenticeship programs through BOLI. These programs will provide **hands-on training, allowing individuals to gain real-world experience while earning a certification, creating a stronger and more sustainable pipeline of qualified early educators.**

While Section 2 of this bill initially sought to expand health care benefits for child care workers, we recognize that this particular provision requires further refinement and is not ready for implementation at this time. An amendment removing this section is in the works. I will continue to work toward a solution to ensure access to affordable health care and provide stability for this essential workforce. **That said, the need to act on recruitment, retention, and workforce development is urgent and is ready to move forward.**

HB 3008 represents a vital step toward stabilizing the child care workforce, protecting small businesses, and ensuring that families have access to quality care. **By making strategic investments in workforce retention and career development, we can help build a sustainable and well-supported workforce that meets Oregon's growing child care needs.**

I urge your support of HB3008 and help create a stronger future for child care in our state.

Sincerely,

Representative Courtney Neron

<sup>1</sup> Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, *2024 Oregon Talent Assessment*, 2024, p. 24, <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/strategy-research/Documents/Reports/2024-talent-assessment.pdf>.