



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:

On behalf of Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon), a statewide nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, we strongly urge your support of House Bill 3008. We partner with over 40 organizations, state agencies, and community leaders to advance comprehensive primary prevention efforts in Oregon through our Child Abuse Prevention Collaborative. As a coalition, we recognize **child care is the workforce behind the workforce.**

The 2024 Oregon Talent Assessment<sup>1</sup> named child care as having the most significant labor gaps out of all industries by almost 13%. These gaps are seen in the industry's inability to recruit and retain workers due to:

- Earning low wages, lower than most other industries
- Lack of necessary benefits (ie. health insurance and retirement)
- Barriers to entering the workforce without economic strife

Economic challenges can build stressors within a family and increase risk of child maltreatment. These challenges may present due to unemployment, single parenthood, earlier childbearing, lack of child care, etc. Research shows that access to appropriate, affordable, and available child care is critical for working parents to not only maintain their jobs to support their families, but also to improve parenting ability by decreasing the stressors and promoting balance between professional and parenting responsibilities.<sup>2</sup> **In other words, concrete supports (eg. access to child care) are strong protective factors that reduce rates of child welfare system involvement, reduce parental stress, and increase overall family wellbeing.**

PCA Oregon believes HB 3008 aligns with our core values of promoting comprehensive family supports which prevent the need for child welfare or other crisis interventions. This includes policies that increase access to quality and affordable child care; an outcome we cannot achieve without a strong, diverse, and supported workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/strategy-research/Documents/Reports/2024-talent-assessment.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall\\_System-Transformation\\_The-Role-of-ECS\\_July-2021-1.pdf](https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall_System-Transformation_The-Role-of-ECS_July-2021-1.pdf)

House Bill 3008 will strengthen Oregon's child care workforce by expanding investment in the Child Care Recognition Payment Program and statewide apprenticeship initiatives. This legislation will:

- Provide ongoing financial support to child care workers during economic uncertainty.
- Recognize the value of their work through additional financial assistance.
- Increase pathways into the child care industry and expand the number of qualified workers with education and hands-on experience.
- Support struggling child care businesses in retaining and recruiting quality staff.

Overall, these efforts will enhance workforce participation, economic security for families, and early literacy and school readiness.

PCA Oregon believes in supporting families and children through essential supports and investments required for success in the communities where they live, work, learn, and play. **Our youngest Oregonians are our future. Investing in our future requires investments in our youngest Oregonians, including those that ensure every child has access to quality and accessible child care options.**

In conclusion, we 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, and the children and families served by them. By investing in the workforce, we can ensure all workers are supported in their careers while providers are guaranteed high-quality workers to care for Oregon's children.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Oregon's children and families, and dedicated providers who support them daily.

Sincerely,



Nicole Cunningham  
*Executive Director*  
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon