

To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
From: Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Date: February 11, 2025
RE: In Support of HB 3008

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

On behalf of the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and Onward Eugene, the economic development division of the Eugene Chamber, we strongly urge your support of House Bill 3008.

In our regional economic development efforts, we recognize that child care is the workforce behind the workforce. A U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation [study](#) found that breakdowns in childcare cause states to lose an average of \$1 billion in economic activity annually. Part of the lost revenue stems from the cost of parents missing work because quality childcare was not available—or unaffordable.

The 2024 Oregon Talent Assessment 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.
 - In Lane County, child care workers earn on average just over half of the average wage across all other industries
- Lack of consistent provision of necessary benefits such as health insurance and retirement
- Barriers to entering the workforce without economic strife

House Bill 3008 will support and expand the state's current and future child care workforce. Through continued investment in the Child Care Recognition Payment Program and apprenticeship programs across the state, this will support child care workers by:

- Continuing to provide financial support to child care workers during economic uncertainty
- Expand the number of quality child care workers who have both education and hands-on experience
- Support child care businesses that are struggling to retain and recruit quality workers

Employers of all sizes and industries across our region site child care as a barrier to recruitment, retention, attendance and productivity. HB 3008 aligns with our efforts to bring cross-sector partners together to elevate promising, effective and sustainable solutions.

HB 3008 also aligns with our core values of promoting quality, affordability, and accessibility in child care; we cannot have this without a strong, diverse, and supported workforce.

We anticipate that HB 3008 will have several specific benefits for Oregon families and child care businesses, including:

- Recognizing the value and the work of child care workers by providing additional financial support
- Increased pathways to enter into the child care industry
- Strengthens the child care industry overall which has downstream positive impacts on workforce participation, economic security for working families, and early literacy and school readiness.

Onward Eugene and the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce have worked over the last year to convene our child care partners to develop an Early Childhood Education Registered Apprenticeship opportunity, with technical assistance from the Early Childhood Workforce Connector. Upon approval from the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council in March, our community will launch a competency-based ECE Registered Apprenticeship that includes 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 220 hours of related training provided by our local Child Care Resource and Referral agency. Upon completion of the program, apprentices will obtain a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification, a Registered Apprenticeship certificate of completion, and will be at Step 7 in the Oregon Registry Online, making them eligible for lead teacher positions. The apprenticeship also includes a wage progression that culminates in the wage of a lead teacher. Participating early learning providers include New Dream Child Care Center and Head Start of Lane County. We view this as a strategy to increase equitable, accessible pathways into the profession, increase quality, and increase wages in the field.

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. 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 our testimony.

Sincerely,



Brittany Quick-Warner

President & CEO, Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and ONWARD Eugene