

Public Testimony Regarding SB 467

To: The Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue  
Senator Meek, Chair; Senator McLane, Vice Chair; Senator Patterson; Senator Starr; and  
Senator Taylor

From: Dan Gaffney  
Success for Kids, LLC and citizen of Oregon

Regarding: Support for SB 467

***Support Oregon's economy and improve high school graduation rates at the same time***

I am disappointed that I am unable to provide my testimony in person or virtually but my schedule does not allow me to do so. Regardless, I want to share with you my viewpoint, and that of many others, regarding the value of supporting SB 467.

The impact of Covid 19 truly demonstrated the need for reliable child care. Many businesses, schools and service providers shut down or greatly reduced hours of operation because of the pandemic. There were fewer safe places for children to go so even if parents were able to go to work, they could not because schools, preschools and child care providers shut down. Oregon was already considered a "child care desert" so the pandemic made it worse.

Resourceful Oregonians formed new alliances to find solutions to the child care shortage. This resulted in greater awareness of the challenges that existed to establish and maintain quality child care. To address the shortages, business leaders, government officials, medical providers and others turned to schools and child care providers. They soon learned the pay that child care providers typically received was about 50% of what a teacher earns and most child care providers receive no benefits. As a result, the turn-over rate of child care providers was very high. They also learned about the requirements and benefits of providing safe high quality child care that addresses the needs and opportunities of children from birth to age 5. With a child's brain development peaking around ages 2-3 but not dropping off until around age 10 (Harvard University/Nelson 2000) it is understandable that well educated dependable child care providers are an important part in determining if a child enters school ready to learn. Having a strong and stable start to life has a direct effect on success in school and beyond.

As a teacher and administrator who worked at all K-12 levels as well as Director of Special Education for 37 years I saw the impact of the early years of a child's life. As a result, I have spent the 12 years since retiring from schools working with parents, medical providers, social workers, business leaders and educators to improve the quality of life experiences for our youngest children in multiple locations across Oregon. By developing new alliances there has been a greater understanding of the value and benefits of dependable quality child care. In Clatsop County there has been significant success in increasing the number of preschool/child care spots in licensed child care organizations, in part, because increased financial and educational support has been provided. As a result, county child care business owners have reported a lower turn-over rate of employees because they see themselves as valued professionals that are appreciated by others.

I now ask you, as representatives of the people of Oregon, to recognize Oregon's child care providers as valued professionals. **By supporting SB 467 you send a message to child care providers that their work is valuable to all of Oregon.** SB 467 will cost Oregon very little because it simply allows child care professionals an opportunity to invest their own money into Oregon's Retirement Savings Plan. The invested funds would come from their own tax refunds, not from tax payer funds. The only cost to Oregon will be the time it takes to set up and manage and account. By supporting SB 467 you are allowing people who make about half of a teacher's salary to invest in their own future. You are also saying that they are important to the economy of Oregon and the success of future generations.