

To: House Committee on Early Childhood & Human Services

From: APANO Communities United Fund and APANO Action Fund

Date: February 20, 2025

RE: In Support of HB 2452

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the APANO Communities United Fund and APANO Action Fund, we write in strong support of House Bill 2452. As an organization rooted in community, serving Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) families across Oregon, we know that access to quality, affordable, and culturally responsive child care is essential for the well-being and success of our communities.

For many AANHPI families, especially immigrants and refugees, navigating the child care system is particularly challenging. Language barriers, lack of culturally appropriate care options, and limited access to information often leave families feeling isolated and without support. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) entities serve as a critical bridge, helping families access quality care and empowering parents to make informed choices for their children.

The current child care crisis in Oregon makes the role of CCRRs even more vital.

Of the 16,000 families with Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) vouchers, over 4,000 remain on a waitlist, unable to find care. This gap leaves families struggling, and in many cases, forces parents—particularly mothers—out of the workforce. With nearly every county in Oregon classified as a child care desert, we must do everything we can to ensure every available child care slot is used efficiently. HB 2452 does exactly that by strengthening the capacity of CCRRs to provide targeted, culturally relevant support for families who need it most.

While services like 211 and FindChildCareOregon.org offer a starting point for families searching for child care, they lack the local expertise and hands-on assistance that CCRRs provide. Families—especially those seeking culturally specific, language-accessible, or specialized care—benefit most from CCRRs' direct community engagement, provider vetting, and personalized support. CCRRs are also particularly essential for families in rural areas, where child care options are scarce and parents often need additional assistance finding care that meets their unique needs.

HB 2452 will strengthen the capacity of CCRRs to better serve all Oregon families by providing grants that will:

- Expand culturally and linguistically responsive services for families who speak languages other than English.

- Increase outreach and support to underserved communities, including API, BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee families.
- Ensure that child care providers, including home-based and culturally specific providers, receive the training and resources needed to meet families' diverse needs.
- Revive a successful pre-2016 model in which CCRRs played a central role in connecting families with available care options.

These investments will help break down systemic barriers and ensure that all families—regardless of race, income, or zip code—have access to the child care resources they need. We believe HB 2452 reflects Oregon's values of equity and inclusion, creating a child care system that works for everyone.

As we work toward a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive, we urge your support of HB 2452. Strengthening CCRRs is a vital step toward building a child care system that truly serves all of Oregon's families.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

-Kaliko Castille, Political, Policy, Advocacy and Civic Engagement (PPACE) Director

APANO Communities United Fund + APANO Action Fund

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