



Support House Bill 3201
House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services
March 4th, 2025

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

My name is Arielle Hacker and I am the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon), a statewide nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect through upstream, community-based and comprehensive prevention strategies. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 3201 which would strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

CACFP provides reimbursement to providers serving nutritious meals and snacks to children in child care centers, afterschool programs, and children living in emergency shelters.¹ CACFP improves nutrition and food security for children, makes child care more affordable for families, enhances the quality of child care, and stabilizes the income of child care providers.² We know that access to quality child care and nutritious meals are critical for healthy brain development, cognitive function, and emotional regulation.³

We also know that economic and concrete supports (ie. affordable and quality child care, food access, financial security, etc.) reduce child welfare system involvement⁴, improve academic performance⁵, and improve overall child and family wellbeing.

Every child deserves access to nutritious food— yet 1 in 6 children in Oregon don't have enough to eat.⁶ The rate is 2-3x higher for Black, Latine, and Indigenous children.⁷ Child hunger is not inevitable; *it is a policy choice*.

HB 3201 will address these injustices by:

- **Increasing Reimbursement Rates:** The bill proposes to increase reimbursement for eligible meals and snacks, ensuring that all providers can afford to serve nutritious food.
- **Support for Home-Based Providers:** It will bring Tier 2 home-based providers up to the same reimbursement level as Tier 1 providers. Currently, these providers receive different rates based solely on their location, despite facing comparable food expenses.

¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/childnutrition/cacfp/pages/community%20nutrition%20programs.aspx>

² <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/why-cacfp-important>

³ <https://copakids.com/child-healthcare-news/the-connection-between-nutrition-and-learning-feeding-the-growing-brain/>

⁴ <https://www.chapinhall.org/research/economic-and-concrete-supports-are-key-ingredients-in-programs-designed-to-prevent/>

⁵ https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/School-Meals-are-Essential-Health-and-Learning_FNL.pdf

⁶ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/child/oregon>

⁷ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2021/child/oregon>

- **Culturally Specific Menus:** The legislation includes a one-time allocation of \$250,000 to Oregon State University to create culturally specific menus based on USDA guidelines.
- **Supplemental Administrative Funding:** Maintaining the \$660,000 allocated during the 2024 session will provide essential administrative support for home-based sponsoring organizations, enhancing statewide coverage and support for these providers.

Reflecting on my own experiences as a young child in a single-parent household, I vividly recall how my mother had to juggle multiple jobs to meet our basic needs. This meant that my early mornings and evenings were spent in a home-based child care center. Each day, my mother found comfort in knowing that when she dropped me off, I would receive a nutritious breakfast and, when she picked me up, I wouldn't be hungry. This alleviated a significant source of stress for her and supported my brain development during those crucial formative years.

PCA Oregon partners with over 40 community-based organizations, state agencies, and advocacy coalitions to actualize our vision for an Oregon where all kids and families are living happy and purposeful lives with hope for the future. This vision hinges on our youngest Oregonians and their families having access to the economic and concrete supports required to meet their basic needs.

The most direct way to support Oregonians is to provide the resources they need and deserve, including access to healthy and nutritious food. We are calling on our lawmakers to pass HB 3201 so that our youngest Oregonians have the food they need to learn and grow.

Again: child hunger is not inevitable; *it is a policy choice*.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children and families in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Arielle Hacker

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