

Submitter: Andrea Metheney
On Behalf Of: Carrie Tilton-Jones
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5514

Date: 3/5/25
SB 5514 In support

According to the Oregon Talent Assessment, child care faces the largest labor gap of any industry in our state, at 12.6%. Shockingly, child care workers are also the lowest-paid in Oregon, earning an average annual salary of just \$35,000. This is unsustainable and unacceptable.

To put this into perspective, MIT's Living Wage Calculator reveals that a living wage for an adult with no children in Multnomah County is \$26.45 per hour - approximately \$52,000 per year. Yet, the dedicated individuals we trust to care for our children earn barely two-thirds of this amount. This disparity is unconscionable.

We must prioritize the well-being and fair compensation of these vital care workers. To meet the Oregon Legislature's commitment to adequately fund early learning programs, I urge that an additional \$500 million be allocated to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) in the next biennium. Without this critical funding, thousands of eligible families will be denied access to essential subsidies, exacerbating the existing crisis.

Investing \$500 million into the Employment Related Day Care program is not just good for families - it's also crucial for the economic stability of child care providers themselves. By increasing reimbursement rates and providing more resources for providers, we can help ensure that they are able to sustain their businesses, pay their staff a living wage, and provide high-quality care to our children. This investment will have a ripple effect throughout our economy, supporting small businesses, creating jobs, and stimulating local economic growth.

We must do better for these essential workers and the families they serve. I implore you to take action and provide the necessary funding to support our child care system.

Sincerely,
Carrie Tilton-Jones