

**Chairs Sollman & Ruiz and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Megan Murray, and I am a mother and community member from McMinnville, Oregon. I am here today to voice my strong support for SB 5514 and to urge you to invest in Oregon's youngest and most vulnerable residents.

As a mother, I know firsthand the importance of early childhood care and education. The first years of a child's life are a critical window for development—every moment shaping the future adult they will become. But too many families in our state struggle to access the basic resources necessary to provide this foundation. Quality childcare, early learning programs, and family support services are not luxuries; they are lifelines.

Investing in the Department of Early Learning & Care (DELIC) is not just an investment in children today—it is an investment in Oregon's future. When we provide support early, we set children on a path to success, reducing the likelihood of future struggles with education, employment, and even the criminal justice system. Research has shown time and again that prevention and early intervention yield long-term benefits, not just for the individual but for society as a whole.

This budget supports programs that directly impact families like mine and many others across the state. Expanding **Employment Related Day Care (ERDC)** funding ensures parents can continue working or pursuing education without the impossible burden of unaffordable childcare. Increasing support for **Healthy Families Oregon Home Visiting** means that new parents—especially those in rural and underserved communities—receive guidance and assistance to build a strong foundation for their children. **Relief Nurseries** offer critical services to prevent families from entering crisis situations that could lead to the foster care system, saving both financial and human costs.

Oregon's children deserve better than to be placed on waiting lists while their families struggle to stay afloat. They deserve to grow up in a state that values them enough to invest in their future. By fully funding these programs, you are not just allocating dollars—you are affirming that every child in Oregon matters, regardless of their zip code or their parents' income.

I urge you to approve the full funding necessary for these crucial services. Let's choose children today so they can become the thriving, contributing citizens of tomorrow.

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

Megan Murray  
McMinnville, Oregon