

Submitter: Andrea Metheney  
On Behalf Of: Michelle Lasley  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5514

Date: 3/5/25  
SB 5514 In support

My name is Michelle Lasley, I live in Portland and I am a parent of a 16 year old. Thank you for this opportunity to weigh in about the state budget. I am writing now to urge you to make child care a top priority.

I didn't plan to become pregnant. I wished I had planned my pregnancy - just so we could have figured out child care. I assumed there would be child care on every corner, and I was wrong. I was finishing school at Portland State, so nearing the end of my pregnancy, I called the on-campus child care and was told I should have been on a waitlist 2 years ago.

There are so many intersections of lack of care - inadequate medical coverage, inadequate resources to help me through the system, and most especially inadequate availability to child care. Even though he had state insurance, we used food stamps, and I was on WIC— I had no idea if I even qualified for child care. Which meant we had to deal with it all on our own. So, while we managed, my career never got started, my ability to earn never got started, my ability to contribute fully to my family never got started.

Eventually, I did find work. The first thing that I could get that would work with our schedule needs, paid \$12/hour. Thankfully, there were spots for my now toddler, but I paid \$9/hour for him to attend that child care center. After taxes, what was I left with? Even when I got a slightly better job and we switched my son's care, the realization hit - I was paying for the privilege of going to work. And, with my years of experience and college degree, I could still only find slightly above entry level work that would fit in the hours I could work - the hours I could afford to work to balance child care.

This was between 2007 and 2010. This was more than 10 years before our global pandemic. We owe our mothers better. We owe our families better. We owe our kids better than this.

That's why I am urging you to invest an additional \$500 million dollars in the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program. This critical funding will help address the systemic issues plaguing our child care system, including the lack of availability and affordability of high-quality child care options. By investing in ERDC,

we can ensure that more families have access to affordable and high-quality child care options, regardless of their income level.

I urge you to take action to ensure that all parents have access to the resources they need to provide their children with a strong foundation for success. Investing an additional \$500 million dollars in ERDC is a critical step towards creating a more stable and equitable child care marketplace.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Lasley