

Date: 3/25/25

To: House Early Childhood and Human Services

From: Andrea Haverkamp

Re: Support for HB 2593

Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Haverkamp, and I am a political and legislative staff organizer for AFT-Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 2593.

AFT-Oregon represents over 18,000 education workers across Oregon. This includes instructional and research faculty, academic professionals, and classified staff, and also over 3,000 graduate student employees across the state at community colleges and public universities. Our higher education labor community not only works tirelessly to support student parents in their education journey in the classroom and through wraparound services - many of our members *are* student parents. On behalf of our members, we strongly encourage your support of House Bill 2593.

For AFT-Oregon graduate student employees at UO, OSU, and PSU, a lack of access to affordable childcare has been a constant crisis for well over a decade. The issue only continues to intensify as wages stagnate while childcare costs balloon. Childcare benefits and subsidies have been the topic of collective bargaining negotiations for our graduate employee labor unions in every contract cycle. Childcare is an essential element of life for graduate employee parents. For many student parents obtaining their undergraduate degree, however, there is little collective action they can take to advocate for this core need.

In 1992, AFT at the national level passed a resolution simply titled “Childcare.” This resolution recognizes that child care is an essential ingredient for working parents trying to obtain a better life through education, it forms the cornerstone of our education system, and that access to quality childcare is necessary for both children and their parents to thrive. To this day, the AFT remains committed to childcare access and affordability for working parents, student parents, and working student parents.

The Employment-Related Day Care Program, or ERDC, was created to support student parents. Advocates and students know that it is falling short of reaching its full potential. This bill will help.

HB 2593 will enable the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to change the name of the program to a more accurate name, as students often believe they are not eligible if they are not employed. It will also bring vital data before the legislature and stakeholders on the current status of ERDC enrollment and its waitlist, and how DELIC can or is working to reach out to student communities across the state.

AFT-Oregon is committed to working on behalf of the students we serve, and our members who are graduate student parents, to ensure no parent has to choose between childcare or furthering their education. We believe in Oregon, we are stronger when parents afford to choose both.

Thank you,



Andrea Haverkamp, PhD.
AFT-Oregon, Political and Legislative Organizer
<https://www.aft-oregon.org/about-aft-oregon>