

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Aaron Bedolla Sotelo, and I represent PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. I am writing to demand that lawmakers prioritize critical investments in child care initiatives that will significantly benefit families, strengthen our workforce, and local economies. We strongly support the following allocations:

- An additional \$250 million to the Department of Early Learning and Care to eliminate the waitlist for Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) and ensure that 4,000 approved families are connected with child care providers.
- \$14 million for HB 2452 to fund Child Care Resource and Referral Directors, guaranteeing that families can find suitable care options.
- \$16 million for HB 3008 to continue recognition bonus payments to child care providers and enhance investment in workforce apprenticeship programs.

These investments are crucial for stabilizing the child care ecosystem and addressing the systemic issues that have plagued us for far too long. We must ensure every family, regardless of income level, has access to affordable, high-quality child care options that meet their needs.

Our members have made it clear: child care must be a top priority this legislative session. At PCUN, we firmly believe that robust child care services form the backbone of a strong workforce.

As a dedicated community member who cares deeply about the well-being of local families, I am urging you to back these bills. These initiatives are essential to empowering our members to continue their work and studies with peace of mind, knowing their children are well taken care of.

I call upon you to allocate these critical funds to strengthen child care infrastructure and guarantee access to quality care for all families. This investment is not just necessary; it is urgent and will have a transformative impact on our communities and the future of Oregon.

Thank you,

Aaron Bedolla Sotelo
PCUN