



FAMILY FORWARD OREGON

Smart policies for today's families.

February 10, 2014

Testimony in Support of HB 4048 and HB 4121: Child care Grants for Community Colleges
Submitted by Kate Newhall, Family Forward Oregon

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 4048 and HB 4121. Family Forward Oregon wholeheartedly supports the creation of a grant program to provide child care resources to community college students. **We know that the high cost of quality child care is a significant barrier to educational and career advancement for many community college students in Oregon.** The grant program envisioned in these two bills would help student parents achieve their career goals.

Family Forward Oregon is an organization committed to advancing policies that support families and help them succeed, both in the workplace and at home. Our mission is to create a family-forward Oregon where *all* families can be economically secure and have the time it takes to work and to care. Today, too many families are forced to sacrifice one or the other. Family Forward supports policies, like affordable child care, that make economic stability and work-family balance more achievable.

It's no surprise to any working parent that child care is far too expensive and unaffordable for too many Oregonians. **A 2013 report from Oregon State University found that the median cost of child care can cost nearly twice as much as college tuition at Oregon's public universities: \$11,064 per year for a toddler versus \$6,670 annual college tuition.**¹ This same report found that child care costs in Oregon increased 13% from 2004 to 2012 while household incomes declined 9% (15% for single mothers). Child care is one of the biggest budget items for working families – the annual cost of child care for two-parent families is 18.6% of annual income and 61.6% of annual income for single-parent families² - and frequently dictates whether a parent can afford to work outside the home or participate in education and training programs.

It's also no surprise that those with higher levels of education generally earn higher wages. Achieving a post-secondary education goes a long way toward improving an individual's long-term earning potential. **When 23% of community college students are also parents, the need is great. Access to child care is a significant issue that can impact a parent's academic success.**³ Parents who are forced to forgo or delay educational advancement are faced with a

¹ "[Child Care and Education in Oregon and Its Counties: 2012](#)," Oregon State University, 2013

² Child Care Aware. (2013). Parents and the High Cost of Child Care, 2013 Report. Retrieved from http://usa.childcareaware.org/sites/default/files/cost_of_care_2013_103113_0.pdf

³ "[Child Care at College Campuses: a Critical Resource for Student Parents](#)," IWPR, 2013



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lifetime of lowered income potential and career opportunities, which negatively impacts their family's economic security. This disproportionately impacts women and single parents who most often sacrifice career opportunities and educational advancement due to high child care costs. **Especially in Oregon, where child care was ranked the least affordable of all 50 states in 2013.**⁴

It should also be noted that people who work in child care earn low wages and often receive inadequate benefits. Safety, training and quality of care providers is also an issue with which many low-income parents contend, leaving many children in care situations that fail to appropriately educate and protect them. **All working families need access to affordable, quality child care in Oregon.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of HB 4084 and HB 4121. Family Forward Oregon sees these bills as a key component of workforce development, supporting student parents, and advancing the economic security of more Oregon families.

⁴ ["Parents and the High Cost of Child Care,"](#) Child Care Aware of America, 2013