



February 25, 2015

KATE BROWN
Governor

The Honorable Alissa Keny-Guyer
House Committee on Human Services & Housing
H-484 State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing,

I support HB 2015 which expands access to and strengthens Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) to support working families and promote positive child development.

As Secretary of State, I conducted an audit on child care in December 2014, (<http://sos.oregon.gov/audits/Documents/2014-25.pdf>). Oregon's child care costs have increased in recent years while household income has decreased, especially among single mothers. One study from the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) reported that in 2012 single mother families used 62% of their income to pay for their infants' care. Families with young children need child care in order to work, and their choices are constrained. Finding affordable child care that meets their needs and supports their child's growth causes families significant stress. The median annual price for infant-toddler care in a child care center in Oregon is over \$13,400, the nation's fifth highest.

ERDC provides subsidies to working families with low incomes to help offset the cost of child care. By assisting low-income families, ERDC helps families stay employed and be self-sufficient. Affordable child care can increase family earnings and the state's economic vitality by allowing parents to earn wages without disruptions due to a lack of affordable care for their children.

The quality of child care can also significantly impact child development and school readiness. Child care that includes positive interactions with caregivers and language rich environments can bolster a child's language development and social-emotional growth. This positive early development provides the foundation for later success in school and life.

Although investing can be costly, affordable child care can also create long term benefits. Through HB 2015 and efforts to increase funding and support for early learning, we can make a real change in Oregon toward ensuring all children enter Kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.

Thank you for your work to address child care issues and tackling affordability, accessibility and safety.

Sincerely,

Governor Kate Brown

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