



March 6, 2017

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the committee,

Thank you, for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 470. Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents licensed, both registered and certified, in-home child care throughout the state. These settings are also known as licensed Family Child Care.

You may know through personal experience, knowing a family with young children or hearing the numerous reports that finding quality child-care that meets the needs of children and families, is often difficult. This is especially true for families with children under the age of 2, for parents with children with special needs and for families seeking care outside of non-Monday through Friday daytime work hours. Families are often put on wait lists for openings that are months—to close to a year—to get their child into their preferred setting. This leaves parents using a patchwork of care, or staying out of the workforce all together until the opening becomes available. This isn't just anecdotal. According to the Children First for Oregon's March 2013 policy brief "Child Care: Good for Kids, Good for Business", there were 1 in 3 children under the age of 4 in paid child care settings, and the demand was greater than availability. The report pointed out that Oregon has only 18 child care slots per 100 children under the age of 13. This is 30% short of the US Department of Health and Human Services' recommended 25 available slots for every 100 children.

Family child care settings are an integral part of our child care system that helps meet these needs for children and families. They can have licenses that allow for operation outside of the center based hours of 7am-5:30 or 6pm. They provide more personalized settings where children are exposed to learning opportunities through their teachers as well as being with kids of other ages. Family child care providers are often already known, trusted and likely match families' cultural norms and values because they are in the families' neighborhoods.

Licensed Family Child Care settings are regulated by the state, have regular inspections from the Early Learning Divisions' Office of Child Care and the Department of Human Services. Registered in-home providers can care for up to 10 children and are subject to ratios based on ages of the children. Certified in-home providers can care for up to 16 children and in addition to the age ratios, they also have rules based on the square footage of the licensed child care area of the home. In both types of settings, providers and any staff they may employ are required to take a basic level of training each year. These training requirements include basic health and safety as well as developing curriculum for their programs that include educational and physical activities. They have rules about supervising children inside and outside of the house at every moment those children are in care. Children are not left to run wild or simply placed in front of a television. For Spark* rated, formerly the Quality Rating and Improvement System, providers these training hours and expectations increase with every additional

* <http://triwou.org/projects/qris/about> "Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a program that raises the quality and consistency of child care and early learning programs across the state. The Quality Rating System recognizes, rewards and builds on what early learning and development programs are already doing well. It helps ensure children in QRIS programs are ready for kindergarten by connecting programs and providers with free tools, financial incentives and professional advice that they can put into practice with confidence." It is a voluntary program with an extensive application and approval process for licensed, center based and in-home, child care that essentially allows them to have a marketable standard of "quality." Many providers, regardless of participation in QRIS, exceed their license's basic training requirements.

star rating they receive. Providers must have insurance that covers their business, beyond basic home-owners insurance.

SB 470 is not the only solution needed to help ensure families have access to quality child care, however, it is one way we can help remove barriers to quality child care. AFSCME urges your support of SB 470.

Sincerely,

Eva Rippeteau
Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME Council 75