

Dear Chair Lively, co-chairs Hack and Piluso and members of the Committee,

My name is Sabi Velasco, I am a Certified Family Child Care provider in Aloha, currently with a 3-star rating in Spark, formerly the Quality Rating and Improvement System and last summer I was selected to be a Preschool Promise provider. I am also an elected board member of AFSCME Local 132. I am here today to support HB 2013 and the changes it will make to Preschool Promise to acknowledge that quality doesn't only come from having a college degree.

I take pride in the bilingual program that I run, and the level of care and education that my staff and I provide. When I was selected to participate in Preschool Promise, I felt honored to be recognized as a quality program. As with anything new there have been some challenges and it has been a learning experience for me. The most challenging part of participating in the program was that I am currently not qualified to be the lead teacher in my program, because I do not have a degree and am currently at step 8.5 on the Oregon Registry Online (the child care professional development program run by Portland State University). Through the training I have received as part of my licensing requirements as well as additional hours for continued professional growth, I know what it takes to prepare curriculum, run a classroom, provide care to children of a variety of ages and run a good business. However, as a Preschool Promise participant, with the way it was written, I had to hire someone with a degree in early childhood education to be the lead teacher of my program. Despite this person having a degree, she did not know how to prepare curriculum or run a classroom. Having academic experience doesn't always translate to application. I appreciate that the language in HB 2013 will acknowledge other training that results in quality child care and early educational outcomes.

Despite the challenges, I am happy to have been selected to participate and am grateful for the continued conversations for raising the wages of the child care and early learning workforce. Child care providers work countless hours and are paid very little. We provide safe learning environments. We provide nutritious meals, sometimes several in a day. For school aged children, we provide transportation to and from school and help with homework. For all of our children, we are often like a second family and it is a privilege and joy to watch them grow. However joy and fulfillment don't pay the bills. The wage provisions for teachers and staff should not be limited to providers in the Preschool Promise program. We should also be looking at ways to increase the wages of all child care providers and I am hopeful that the study called for in the bill will include all of child care.

I am sorry that I couldn't be there today to provide the testimony in person. However, I welcome you to come visit my program and see the investment you all have made and the education of the young children that are in my program.

I urge your support of HB 2013.