

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

My name is Autumn David, I am the president for AFSCME Local 132 Child Care Providers Together. I am a certified family child care provider in Salem and have been in business for 20 years. I have 12 Preschool Promise children, I am step 10 on the Oregon registry and our program is 5 stars on Spark, formerly the Quality Rating and Improvement System. Five stars is the highest rating a child care facility can receive and has high standards for training for me and my staff, parent engagement, and of course quality care for the children.

First I want to thank you for helping make Preschool Promise a reality. I have seen firsthand how this is benefiting our community and the children that would not be able to participate in preschool. When I was selected to be a Preschool Promise provider I was honored. I have built my program from ground up over the last 20 years and am proud of the program we have. When Preschool Promise was first starting, I attended meetings and it was brought up that the qualifications would be the lead teacher would have to have a bachelors degree. I advocated against this as I knew this would keep many quality providers, including me, from being the lead teachers in our own programs. Oregon has built a system called the Oregon Registry, a professional development ladder for providers to show the step they are on based on hours and types of training. I am a step 10 which is equivalent to the hours of training I would have taken to earn a bachelors degree in the child care field. With the current requirement for Preschool Promise of having a bachelors degree I have hired a lead teacher instead of working as the lead teacher myself.

Accepting to participate in Preschool Promise I have thought hard if it is worth my time and effort to go back to school for a bachelors. At this time in my life I do not think it is a wise choice. There is no funding for further education, there is no replacement of time this would take away of my husband, children and now grand children. Would the time be worth taking away from my childcare program I have worked so hard to build? We work long hours preparing curriculum and food, cleaning and doing administrative work beyond our 13 hour work day. I have to think what benefits would this really give me? I cannot think of any way this would benefit my program. I agree high standards are important and think the system of the Oregon Registry could work in guiding the requirements..

I ask that you feel free to visit my program and see how having a degree would benefit me at this time in our journey. I am not opposed to having a degree and applaud those who do but it is not something that will make my program better. I ask that you consider the changes this bill would make.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my story.

Autumn David
Island Adventures Preschool & Child Care