



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chair Noble, Vice Chair Sanchez, members of the committee,

My name is Representative Karin Power, and I represent House District 41. As one of a few legislators with a young child in daycare, I am thrilled to partner with stakeholders in introducing the suite of childcare legislation before you today.

The lack of access, the need to ensure quality, and the inability for families to afford childcare has been a silent burden that families with young children have been enduring for far too long. A study by the Center for American Progress confirms something that our constituents know all too well: Oregon is a child care desert.¹ A child care desert is defined as a place where there are more than three children per licensed, available child care slot. This dearth of providers has led to increased costs for these services. In 2018, the median annual price of full time care for a toddler in a child care center was more than \$14,000.² This statewide figure, that rivals annual tuition at a state college, does not even keep pace with the reality that my constituents in Clackamas County face, where the median annual price of toddler care in a child care center lands closer to \$14,400.³ In the northern region of my district, Multnomah County residents can expect to pay \$16,236 a year.⁴

My wife and I pay more than either of these medians. Full time care for our son, Grady, costs us \$16,824 per year. We heavily trimmed our family budget and saved for more than a year before his birth so we could afford a center that provides a living wage salary, vacation, and paid time off for its employees; continuing education and other training; and parent-teacher meetings to check-in on developmental and educational progress. We believe Grady's teachers deserve every penny. The personal trade-off is that we are not saving for our retirement or saving for his future education at the rate that we wish we could. We are also waiting to try to have a second child until his daycare costs come down as he approaches kindergarten. This choice to delay having children is hardly an unusual one amongst millennial families in the United States. Today, the birth rate for millennials is the lowest the country has seen in 30 years.

Over the last two years, I have heard time and time again from constituents who cannot find feasible and affordable childcare options. This is a multifaceted, complex problem that will not be solved today or even in this session, but my hope for this hearing is to set the context for these issues, share the gravity of this situation, and embark on a path to long term systemic change for Oregon. The status quo is not working for anybody in this system.

To that end, I particularly wanted to highlight two bills, HB 2346 and HB 2348. The goal of HB 2348 is to better serve families participating in ERDC. Oregon's child care assistance program has one of the highest co-pays in the nation and unfortunately, far too many families are cannot afford to participate.

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/10/31/460128/understanding-infant-toddler-child-care-deserts/>

² <https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-study-child-care-deserts/>

³ Early Care and Education Profiles: 2018 Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Oregon State University

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KARIN POWER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 41
MULTNOMAH AND CLACKAMAS COUNTIES



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Many families are dropping out, because the copays associated with the program can get up to 20-30% of a family's income.

HB 2348 will limit ERDC parent co-pays to the federally recommended level of 7% of family income and as recommended in the federal child care development funds (CCDF) Oregon uses to fund ERDC.

HB2346 establishes a task force, which stakeholders and I hope to amend in order to look more holistically at child care in our state. We are seeking to address the larger child care access and affordability crisis facing all Oregon families with young children. We know that the current system doesn't work— for families, for child care providers or to support the workforce and business planning that employers need. This state is in desperate need for a long term vision and plan to address our child care crisis. I proposed a multi-year task force in HB 2346 to evaluate current systems and resources, and then develop a plan to significant increase access, affordability and quality by 2025.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. Power".

State Representative Karin Power

