

February 20th, 2019

To: The House Housing and Human Services Committee

From: Tia Dunham,

Re: Support of HB 2346, HB 2348, and HB 2024

Dear Chair Keny Guyer,

My name is Tia Dunham and I live in Portland.

When I moved to Oregon from Washington, finding child care was hard. I tried google searching which didn't yield much information. Identifying what is quality and what will qualify for ERDC once I found it was an overwhelming task. Deciphering SPARK ratings was an added layer of confusion to an already daunting process. I ended up finding a daycare that was close to my home and enrolled in ERDC. After all of that, there was still more back and forth with ERDC to get her enrolled. I was working full time and it was a time consuming burden, so I used my lunch breaks to call ERDC, but, eventually, I got her enrolled.

18 months after enrolling her in daycare I received a 60 cent raise and a one-time profit share and bonus. We added two people to our household and those small changes caused my co-pay to rocket from \$300 per month to \$1,200 per month. Again, more back and forth with ERDC to figure out my income with my partners self-employment. Every person who worked for ERDC had different calculations for my copay based on their personal estimations of what my partner made as a self employed person. So, everytime I called, I got a different answer and a different estimate of what my copay would be.

I already had difficulty affording the \$300 co-pay, so when my co-payment was increased to \$1200 per month my child care provider ended care as soon as they heard about the increase. They knew I couldn't afford the full payment, so when I came to pick my daughter up, they had her things ready. I was without daycare. I was lucky to have back up care for the summer but when summer ended, my affordable care went back to school and I had to quit my job.

After splitting with my partner, I was offered the TANF subsidy with no copays. If I get another job at \$15 an hour, I will be kicked off. So I am stuck: I can't get a new job but I also am forced to rely on welfare, which is never where I wanted to be. I should be able to provide for my child, work and set an example I would be proud of for her. The state doesn't allow me to do that and I feel ashamed. Please make ERDC copays affordable and help mothers like me get back into the workforce so we can set examples for our children that we can be proud of.

Sincerely,

Tia Dunham