

April 21st, 2021

To: The House Early Childhood Committee
From: Nicola Van Hoff,
Re: Funding for childcare and HB 3073

Dear Co-Chairs Betsy Johnson, Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, and Dan Rayfield,

My name is Nicola Van Hoff and I live in Portland, OR. The most important things in my life are my kids. I want them to live in a different world than right now, cooped up staying safe. Right now so many in our community are desperate for simple necessities like food, shelter, and stability. My kids have been exposed to the disparity of the Covid pandemic. I believe everyone should be provided necessities to thrive, and individuals and families should not have to just survive.

I was forced out of the workforce in 2018 because I couldn't afford childcare, plus the waiting lists were over a year-long for anything. We live in a childcare desert. I started working on self-employment, building a business, and as a full-time Mom. An already broken system is exceptionally worse during this pandemic.

The pandemic has left me unemployed. I feel stuck, fatigued, depressed, and anxious to figure it all out, but it's an uphill battle for me, other parents, and caregivers and we need help. So many great centers have closed and those around have had to raise rates, take personal loans, and are going without an income. The community has reached its capacity and needs this help. Now is the time to invest in childcare subsidy programs like the ERDC.

Sincerely,

Nicola Van Hoff