

April 24th, 2021

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
From: Rebecca Velazquez, NE Salem
Re: Funding HB 3073 and child care programs

Dear Tri-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rebeca Velazquez and I live in NE Salem.

I would like to offer testimony on the situation that many families that are not “low income” still have to struggle with. We are in a gray area in a system that only deals with black and white, rich or poor. What about the working class that still can't afford some basic needs such as child care and that often makes us decide on something that really is not a fair choice?

My husband and I struggled with finding affordable child care with our last child. We have two older children and therefore many other expenses to cover and consider. I needed to go back to work because we could not afford for me to continue to stay at home. We found ourselves in a difficult situation as we earned more than what low income programs like Head Start allows you to earn to be eligible for services, but not enough to make the cost of quality child care something that we could cover even with two incomes.

Thanks to the fact that I work at a non-profit organization and that they accepted and understood my situation, I was able to take my son to the office. This allowed me to continue to work which was a blessing, but at times created some difficulties. I do not regret having taken my son to work; it allowed me to see him grow within my workplace until he went into kindergarten. He was missed once he left and had become a normal part of our work environment. He was a quiet baby and I had a supportive work group. At the same time, it was not easy nor was it ideal. The cost of child care should not be something that leads us to poverty; it is a basic need that all families should be able to access and afford, just like K-12 education.

With the recent pandemic my older daughter was at home and able to help out her little brother with distance learning. However this was not ideal as she is in her senior year of high school and has her own education to focus on. Our system is just not working for moderate income families let alone low income families and this needs to change! Please fund HB 3073 to reform our child care system in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Rebeca Velazquez