



April 27, 2021

Testimony in Support of HB 3073A

To: House Committee on Rules

Dear Chair Smith Warner, Co-Chairs Drazan, Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Marchel Hirschfield, my pronouns are she/her and I am the Political Director and submitting this testimony on behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO). I am also a single parent raising 2 boys, ages 9 and 5. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3073 A.

Our organization serves the Asian Pacific Islander community throughout Oregon. APANO unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work. Every family deserves access to high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care, and every child care provider should be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do. Women, especially those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/ or women of color, are most impacted by our lack of investment in child care. They are more likely to be working in essential work, more likely to be juggling the demands of working and caring for kids, and more likely to be excluded from the workforce in a childcare shortage. Every county in Oregon is a child care desert for infant and toddler care. Child care closures resulting from the COVID-19 emergency will undermine the economic recovery of the state.

As a teen mother, I would like to share my personal experience navigating child care in Oregon. I have always struggled to find quality and culturally specific care that I could afford. The obstacles I encountered with childcare in Oregon:

- The current ERDC program takes into consideration the schedule of both working parents in the household and would only provide assistance during the hours where both parents were not available.
- The current ERDC program did not take into consideration that I was experiencing domestic violence in my relationship and that I would need access to child care to support navigating through relationship violence in hopes to leave the abuse. They denied my application letting me know that since I had a partner without a job at home, they are considered an available child care provider.
- Early Headstart for my youngest did not offer child care options but rather in-home options which would require a parent's presence so that offered no child care solutions.
- I also applied for scholarship opportunities through the YMCA and the calculated child care costs with a scholarship was still equal to and sometimes more than the cost of my rent and was not an affordable option.
- Navigating through multiple agencies I felt defeated, confused, and had to create short term child care solutions which was not sustainable for the development of my children.



COVID-19 has laid bare the insufficiencies of our current child care system. It will take a long-term, sustained effort to rebuild a child care system that truly works for all our families. In the meantime, we can start with House Bill 3073A.

On behalf of the Asian Pacific Islander community in Oregon, please pass House Bill 3073A, which will provide some immediate relief for families and providers impacted by COVID-19 and begin to address the major problems with our state's child care assistance program, Employment Related Day Care.

Sincerely,

Marchel Hirschfield, Political Director, APANO