

February 15th, 2021

To: The House Early Childhood Committee
From: Zakkiyya Ibrahim,
Re: Support of HB 2503 and HB 3073

Dear Chair Rep. Power and Vice-Chairs Rep. Renyolds & Rep. Zika,

My name is Zakkiyya Ibrahim and I live in Tigard, OR. I own two Certified Family home child cares in Tigard. Prior to opening my programs I obtained a BS in Family Life and Early Childhood Development in 2006 and recently completed a MA in Special Education specializing in Applied Behavior Analysis with an Emphasis in Autism. I hold a Step 11 in the Oregon Registry and provide high quality culturally competent care to the children in my program and community. Although I have only owned my own childcare program for three and a half years in Oregon. I have a total of 12 years working in the Early Education field from teaching in the classroom, providing in-home early intervention, as well as, management.

Between the two programs I'm licensed to serve 32 children. 18 of the 32 spots are preschool promise, 3 spots are for my own children, so that leaves me 11 spots for Infants and toddlers. My student demographic consists of majority African American children and families. 95% of the student population fall under the 250% FPL. However, I have seen where families have had to choose between working full time versus part time or taking a pay increase in fear of losing their benefits or having their copays increased. Often with the extremely high copays and understanding the burden that puts upon families, I have often taken the hit on pay by allowing parents to either pay a small portion of their copay or none at all. This upon other reasons is why I support the passing of this bill.

I also support this bill because it supports providers and families as follows.

Lower copays

Compensation for enrollment verses attendance just as we expect from private pay families. Therefore providing financial stability for providers and continuance of care for families.

Increased pay for care beyond non-standard care hours. Which provides families with care that work jobs that are beyond the 9-5 and compensates providers for the type of care.

Increased pay for culturally diverse or linguistically diverse providers and programs allowing children and families to have access to programs that closely align with their cultures, language or values.

In closing, I support this bill because it finally shows me that my education, efforts, and program matter. That our field deserves their own focus through the Early Learning Authority. That early education is just that education not babysitting. That early education matters and that we are appreciated. And I have always said the best form of appreciation is through compensation.

Sincerely,
Zakkiyya Ibrahim