

Testimony in Support of HB 4005
February 2, 2022

Dear Chair Power, Vice Chairs Reynolds and Zika, and members of the House Committee on Early Childhood:

My name is Jeymey Heredia, and I'm from Hood River, OR. My mom was a childcare provider for about six years before her passing. My husband and I worked at a Head Start when we met and after having our third child, we realized that we couldn't afford childcare and so we decided together that it was best for me to be a stay-at-home mom. After two weeks of being home, I received phone call after phone call from families wanting me to take care of their children, so my husband and I decided that we could help our friends and families by starting our own childcare business.

It's been 12 years, and I couldn't have done it alone. My husband started to help me after six years on my own and my oldest daughter started to also help as soon as she was 16 years old. With only my daughter's help during the summertime, we decided to hire an assistant to help us out. The main reason we hired our assistant was to ensure better quality care for our children from 18-months-old to 10-year-olds. This was especially helpful when we needed potty breaks, doctors' appointments, checking my email for new state COVID guidelines, implementing them into our policies, and most importantly sanitizing at the end of the day.

When we first opened, we were 24-hour care and with the years going by, especially when COVID hit, we had to sadly cut down our hours so we don't get burnt out. But with COVID putting us twice in quarantine, it was too scary to be under the stress of providing a stable income to our assistant, let alone ensuring our own family income. This is not including the increased demand and cost of necessary items like bleach, hand sanitizer, Kleenex, gloves, air sanitizer, etc.

Please help us financially to provide support for our programs and assistants. The demands on me and my husband to meet the needs of children and families in our community has increased every day, while our compensation has not. We want to provide 24-hour care again. We want to be flexible and be here for families when their schools close or whatever they need — but in order to do that, we also need to be able to cover our costs, receive a living wage, and pay our assistant a living wage too.

The increased funding in House Bill 4005 will help us close that gap and be able to get back on our feet again. We need to meet the rising costs to continue to provide quality care, as well as meet our own needs so we can be here for our community. I'm asking that you please support child care providers and families that need care by voting "yes" on HB 4005.

Thank you,

Jeymey Heredia