

Submitter: Anna Pickel

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood

Measure: HB4005

Chair Power, Vice Chairs Reynolds and Zika, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4005. My name is Anna Pickel, I live in SE Portland and I am a parent of 2 boys, 4 and 9, and I have been a family child care provider for 10 years.

The childcare industry in Oregon has been in a crisis since before the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all at our breaking points. Running an essential business during this pandemic has been exponentially challenging. We've had to navigate numerous obstacles during this pandemic and have done most of it without any help from our government. It was November 2021 before Federal dollars that had been allocated to childcare relief was approved by Congress in December 2020 got into providers hands. We survived 2021 on our own and many of us just squeaked by.

The current demand for childcare right now far outweighs the available supply. The Early Learning Division would like you to believe that the childcare industry has recovered from the loss it suffered during COVID, but that just isn't true. Talk to any parent, especially one with an infant or toddler, about how easy it's been for them to find childcare in the past year and you'll get a much better sense of the crisis we are under. I have been trying to expand my program for 9 months to meet this need. I have encountered roadblock after roadblock with building code changes in family childcare, City of Portland change of occupancy issues, landlords uninterested in renting space to childcare programs and a long list of other challenges. I have accomplished nothing and I have invested countless hours of my time. I also have 40 children on a waitlist, 32 of which are babies, many that haven't been born yet. Oregon is in a major childcare crisis and if we don't act immediately working mothers will become a thing of the past.

Please support HB 4005 and make the absolute necessary investment our state needs.

Sincerely,

Anna Pickel

Happy Go Lucky Childcare, Owner/Provider/Teacher