

Submitter: Jessica Boyd
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood
Measure: HB4005

February 2, 2022

To: House Committee on Early Childhood
From: Jessica Boyd, Eugene
Re: Child Care and HB 4005

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

My name is Jessica Boyd and I am speaking today in support of House Bill 4005 and other significant investments needed in child care. I am a mother of 2 children, aged 8 & 13. I'm a child care provider at a center in Eugene. I've worked there for six years now, and have been caring for children for ten years - ever since I graduated with a degree in Early Childhood Education.

When my first child was young, I was at a previous child care center. However, staff couldn't get a discount for their own children until they'd worked there for five years. Over half of my monthly income went to pay for his care at the center where I worked. It wasn't sustainable. Following the birth of my youngest child, I stayed home for a couple of years before returning to work at my current center. Their discount of 50% off care for staff children made it possible for me to work. Still, with two young children in care, I was still paying half of my monthly income in care for my own kids.

A couple of years ago, a new policy, designed to retain staff, was started and it heavily subsidized staff child care; further decreasing the financial burden. This has made paying for my children's care much more sustainable. Our center received grants during COVID that helped subsidize care further for staff.

In the last two years, it has been much harder to find staff that will stay; it feels like a revolving door. We're decreasing center capacity in order to fit the current staff shortage. It has been very hard to hire anyone and families are losing access to child care as a result.

It's not hard to understand why it's difficult to find staff to hire. If it wasn't for my husband, I wouldn't be able to get by on a child care provider's wage. I could not be self-sufficient on my own income. It's really discouraging when the people at Taco Bell are making more than me. Even with a recent wage increase, we're still being underpaid.

As child care providers we are educated, have years of experience, and we deserve recognition for the essential care we provide. We're constantly training throughout the year - keeping up with all certifications, following numerous and conflicting COVID guidelines, and putting our lives and families in a pandemic at risk. We deserve to be getting out of our careers what we put in. We need bills like HB 4005 and other child care investments that recognize the importance of our work and the critical nature of child care to the rest of our economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jessica Boyd
Eugene, OR