

Submitter: Irene Ika  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood  
Measure: HB4005

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

My name is Irene Ika and I am a proud parent of 7 amazing children. I am writing in support of HB 4005 because I believe that every family deserves access to high quality and affordable child care.

Over the years it has been very challenging for me to find and maintain child care. Not all child care providers accept ERDC. When I have found a provider that does accept ERDC slots, many times they are at the maximum number of children that they are allowed to care for and unable to take on any more. This is very frustrating because as a parent it takes so much time and effort to find a provider that is a good fit for my family's needs. It is discouraging to have the same thing happen over and over, finding a child care provider but they are full and not accepting more children.

Another struggle I have had as a parent has been with ERDC subsidies. My child care provider submits the hours and waits for her reimbursement check. Sometimes this takes weeks or more than a month! The reimbursement rates for providers are very low to begin with, and after so long of not receiving payment, my child care provider gets nervous that she will not be paid for the last multiple week's worth of work. I have had her tell me many times when the reimbursement is late that because she is not getting paid she will not watch my kids. This is really difficult because I then have to stay home with my children instead of being able to work. Sometimes this has happened for a few days in a row, which jeopardizes my job. I can't afford to stay home with my kids and not work, and it is a nightmare to scramble to find a different child care provider in such a short period of time.

We need a child care structure and foundation that works for all families and providers. Families should be able to easily access high-quality and affordable child care and providers need to be properly compensated for their work. Please invest in child care and future generations, and support HB 4005.

Sincerely,  
Irene Ika  
Multnomah County