

Submitter: Celia Cruz  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood  
Measure: HB4005

February 2, 2022

To: House Committee on Early Childhood  
From: Celia Cruz  
Re: Child Care and HB 4005

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

I became a grandmother 20 years ago when my daughter became a single teen mom at the age of 17. While it was not ideal, we saw the new member of the family as a blessing and supported our daughter morally and financially so she could finish school. I left the workforce and although this was hard financially for the family it was the right thing to do in order to support our daughter and her new baby boy. Her father became the sole provider for our family. This came with its difficulties but we made it work. My daughter was able to stay in school and the baby was well cared for. She was able to breastfeed for a full year and continue with her studies as I would take her the baby during lunch for her to breastfeed him.

As time passed our first grandson grew to be school age and more grandkids came from our other children. I have now been a child care provider for 20 yrs and 7 grandkids. It has been the most satisfying thing I have done because I have been able to ensure a loving, safe and caring environment for my grandkids. We were blessed that we were always able to make ends meet even after having a reduced income for our family. That changed for me 2 years ago when my husband passed away. I lost my life partner and what little financial stability I had.

When my husband passed away, my daughter and I lost our economic security on top of the sorrow we felt. We had such a hard time making ends meet. I was not able to make our mortgage payment and my daughter had a hard time paying for other basic needs for her and her child. I currently take care of 5 grandkids because of the pandemic and only get paid for 2 of them that qualify for ERDC. ERDC pays very very little. I get even less for the other three, this is because their parents make too much to qualify for ERDC but not enough to afford childcare and their basic needs. So they pay me as much as they can afford which is not much.

This system is not working – not for parents like my children, who can't afford child care. And not for child care providers like me who are barely getting paid. We need to change this for parents and childcare providers alike.

I ask that you fully support HB4005 to help child care providers like me as well as families like mine. I have sacrificed alot for the wellbeing of my family and we are doing as much as we can with what we have and still it's not enough to get us by!

Celia Cruz  
Salem, Oregon