

Submitter: Kara McCrossen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood
Measure: HB4005

February 2th, 2022

To: The House Early Childhood Committee
From: Kara M, Multnomah County
Re: Support of HB 4005
Email: kara.mccrossen@gmail.com

Dear Chair Karin Power and Vice-Chairs Lisa Renyolds & Jack Zika,

I am a mother of three children, two of whom are young and still at home. Anyone who is a parent knows that nothing gets done without childcare. Parents are not able to work without childcare. I have tried, unsuccessfully, and when it became clear that it was no longer feasible to afford childcare on the money I was making in my career, I was forced to leave. I could not justify the cost of paying someone else to watch my children, while I worked. Leaving my career proved costly in more ways than one. Leaving my career, I lost a sense of identity. I felt erased economically and socially.

The stress of the pandemic proved too much for our family. My husband and I divorced. Now that I am navigating single parenthood my ex-husband and I are both scrambling to balance the cost of childcare against a single income. Childcare has always been heavily left to women. I believe it will become less of a gendered issue as more men are directly impacted by lack of care. My ex-husband lost my unpaid caregiving in the divorce, and is now trying to balance the cost of childcare with the cost of living.

I am struggling to find work now with a five-year employment gap in my work history - a direct result of lack of affordable childcare. My current solution is patching together independent contract work in the hours my ex is able to care for our children. This work allows me no health care, and no steady guaranteed income. It is still impossible to work full time, because of the cost of care. I would like to be able to pay someone a really good wage to take care of my babies; but how can you do that when you're not earning a good wage yourself? Our current cost of childcare is comparable to the cost of the mortgage. I know the value of good childcare, but cannot afford to pay for it myself.

Our government has focused on construction jobs, creating work for white men, while the rest of us are left behind. But what will they do when they don't have childcare? Please support House Bill 4005 and other child care investments. Families like mine

need a child care system that works. And right now it doesn't.

Sincerely,
Kara M.
Multnomah County