



Testimony in Support of HB 4005  
Marchel Marcos  
February 2, 2022

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 Marchel Marcos and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO). Founded in 1996, our organization serves the Asian Pacific Islander community throughout Oregon. APANO unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work.

We are writing to offer support for House Bill 4005 because we know that access to child care is necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy. The pandemic has made clear that without care work, no other work can happen. Child care provides the necessary infrastructure for Oregon's essential workforce to continue to work, and we have seen the devastating impact on employment when parents could not find child care, especially for mothers.

Despite how prohibitively expensive child care is for parents, child care providers (who are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color) are among the lowest-paid workers in Oregon. In 2018, the median wage of preschool teachers, many of whom are college-educated, was \$13.95 an hour, and was \$11.86 for child care workers in Oregon. Average annual wages in child care are about half the all-industry Oregon average.<sup>1</sup> This year has made even clearer how essential child care is—it is essential work that makes all other work possible—and yet, we don't compensate providers accordingly.

Child care workers are paid so poorly that 53% of them nationally rely on one or more public benefits, whether Food Stamps, Medicaid, EITC, or TANF.<sup>2</sup> The economic impacts of COVID-19 on women has been sustained throughout the pandemic. In December, about 2 in 5 unemployed women had been out of work for 6 months or longer, including about 41% of Black women, 38% of Latinas, and 44% of Asian women. If we don't act now, we are facing decades of setbacks for women's economic security with the largest burden placed on women who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or other people of color (BIPOC)<sup>3</sup>.

In 2021, the legislature passed HB 3073 which responded to the state's child care crisis and provided immediate and long-term relief to Oregon families most in need of child care by establishing the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) as an independent agency, consolidating child care and early learning administration, and by making needed reforms to the state's child care subsidy program: Employment Related Day Care (ERDC).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://familyforwardoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FFO-Child-Care-Report-2019-REV.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/early-childhood-workforce-2018-index/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/December-Jobs-Day.pdf>



These were essential first steps to streamline our state's administration, but more is needed to ensure we have a child care workforce that can meet the needs of Oregon's families during and beyond the pandemic. Child care providers need additional support that rectifies the decades of financial scarcity they have experienced and that actually invests in building more child care supply, in compensating our providers and educators better, and that grows the capacity of the new Department of Early Learning and Care. HB 4005 will:

- Support providers and child care affordability for subsidy-eligible families by increasing subsidy rates to the 90th percentile of the 2020 child care market rate.
- Support Oregon's child care systems development through HB 3073 Implementation with increased capacity to stand up the new Department of Early Learning and Care.
- Delay fire code requirements on in-home child care providers to prioritize building new provider capacity while still keeping kids safe.

Additionally, we support increasing child care slots through investing in new provider grants, strengthening our state's Child Care Resource & Referral Centers, and direct relief payments to the child care workforce. Without investing in new providers and helping existing providers expand, we are unable to meet current demands and will be even further behind when implementing new state, and likely federal, expanded eligibility to child care subsidies.

Every Oregon family deserves access to high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care, and every child care provider should be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do. (org name) urges your support for HB 4005.

Sincerely,

Marchel Marcos  
Political Director  
APANO