

Submitter: Jameelah Rasheed

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Measure: SB1591

Dear Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Robinson, and members of the committee, My name is Jameelah Rasheed and I am writing in support of SB 1541. I was a certified in-home state child care provider for six years. I have first hand knowledge of the many challenges that child care providers have, as well as the struggles of parents and families.

My child care career began by caring for the Muslim children in my community. My Masjid was the way that I became connected with many families in need of child care. I would care for my nieces and nephews and other parents continued to ask me if I would care for their children as well. That's when I decided to become a state certified in-home child care provider. I wanted to help care for the Black Muslim children in my community because I saw that their parents did not have another culturally specific provider to care for their children.

One of the barriers I experienced as a child care provider was with financial compensation. My reimbursements from the state were always late. One time I did not receive state reimbursement for 5 whole months. I also knew many of the parents personally from my Masjid, and was well aware that many of the families I provided care for were struggling financially. Because of this, I was flexible with parents with their co-pay, oftentimes not even charging at all. Child care is a huge monthly expense for families. I could see how hard it was for working parents who were struggling to make ends meet, and I never turned away a family who could not pay me that week.

As a provider, I wanted to be able to provide for more children in my community and to expand my in-home business, but was not able to do so with the little compensation that I received from the state. I had to turn away many families who were in need of child care. I support SB 1591 because I believe we need to increase the allowable child care slots, while maintaining current safety rules and child ratios for providers, in order to maximize child care opportunities for working families. We can help make this happen by reducing the numerous barriers that child care providers face to do this work. We know that the need for child care is at an all time high, and has become even more dire throughout the pandemic. We have wait lists across the state and more children who need care than we have available slots. Our Oregon families desperately need access to high-quality, culturally specific and affordable childcare. This is an important and urgent matter that needs to be addressed.

I urge the committee to join me in supporting SB 1591. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jameelah Rasheed