

**To: Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Robinson, and members of the committee,**  
**From: Annie Naranjo-Rivera, Nehalem, OR**  
**Re: Child Care SB 1591**

Thank you for your time here today. My name is Annie Naranjo-Rivera and I live in Nehalem, OR. I am writing today in support of immediate action to find child care solutions, specifically in support of SB 1591.

As a Mom, I know firsthand what the childcare crisis means for struggling families. I have 4 kids: 2 school age, 1 participating in public preschool, and one infant who has absolutely no daycare/childcare options available locally.

Preschool options for my daughter were non-existent before the school district received Preschool Promise support. We were on the waitlist (for almost 2 years) for the nearby private preschool, which has limited hours, but was the only local option. Miraculously, with new funding, our district was able to open two public preschools. I am one of the lucky parents who got a preschool slot, but I personally know at least a dozen close friends who cannot find preschool. Many children we know personally have had to participate in parent groups where working parents juggle work schedules to take turns providing basic childcare. In our family, fortunately we have had enough flexibility in our work schedules that we have been able to make it through. However, I am still unable to secure child care for my infant. I now work here in the legislature, but piece together my own childcare to be able to do so.

We have a shortage of every kind of childcare in our district. It is a “childcare desert,” as they say. As a Provider, I have provided in-home childcare as a nanny for many children (because their families could not find childcare) over the past few years, even taking on “nanny-share” situations to help multiple families. Since Covid, I have been approached by numerous families looking for childcare, unable to work due to lack of ability to find care. This included 2 public school teachers from our local schools, at least one of whom has left the profession to stay home with their child.

Taking care of children is an honored responsibility, a profession and a craft. We ought to support those who have undertaken providing childcare professionally. Some parents are not properly trained or prepared to watch large groups of children, yet this is the situation many parents find themselves in currently.

My neighbors watch their grandchildren. Even though they both have severe health issues, one of them needing double knee replacement surgeries, they are the primary providers for their two grandchildren, ages 2 and 6, because there is no one else

to watch them. We have previously attempted to fill in some of the gaps and give them some relief, even an hour or two per week, but this is not sustainable for them, for us, or for our community at large. The grandparents are exhausted and at the end of their rope, and suffer mental health issues due to the stress they are enduring. My neighbors are only two out of hundreds of people looking for care in our area. For many of these families, including mine, there is no available care within approx 50+ miles from where they live.

We need urgent solutions to the childcare crisis. I implore you to consider supporting legislation like SB 1591 to relieve pressure on our communities and offer providers the option to expand the available childcare slots (for certified in-home providers), while still maintaining safety ratios and rules. In the short term, we must consider these kinds of measures. Long term, we must prioritize and fund robust childcare infrastructure, for the sake of parents, children and providers, and of course, for economic reasons. When parents are unable to work due to lack of childcare, it exacerbates the worker shortages that we are facing throughout our district and across the state. We cannot afford inaction any longer.