



January 23, 2023

House Early Childhood and Human Services Committee

RE: Support for HB 2727 and HB 3005

Dear Committee members,

East Cascades Works (EC Works) is one of Oregon's nine Local Workforce Development Boards designated by Oregon's Governor and funded predominantly through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). While supporting the talent needs of employers, EC Works focuses our resources on the career goals and education of the Oregonians residing across our ten-county region. Our region encompasses frontier, rural and urban areas across Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Wheeler, Gilliam, Jefferson, Deschutes, Crook, Klamath and Lake counties as well as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Klamath Tribes (Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin).

We support both HB 2727 and HB 3005 from a workforce development perspective as the lack of quality affordable childcare is impacting the availability of talent to meet the employer needs across our region and the state. We have seen significant local investments in solutions in the Columbia Gorge, Central Oregon and Klamath Basin but it is not enough to fully address the need for early learning educator workforce as well as need for physical infrastructure to address the issue.

Should you have any questions about East Cascades Works or our support for these house bills, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Ficht", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Heather Ficht, Executive Director
East Cascades Works