



February 20, 2023

Testimony in support of HB 2504, HB 2991, and HB 3029

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bills 2504, 2991, and 3029. My name is Marchel Marcos, and I am a parent of two children (5th and 1st grade) in the Hillsboro School District. I am also the Political Director at APANO, a culturally specific organization that unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders, and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development, and cultural work. We are also part of the child care for Oregon coalition.

We are writing to offer support for these bills because we know that access to child care is necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy. Child care provides the necessary infrastructure for Oregon's essential workforce to continue to work, and we continue to see the impact on employment when parents cannot find child care, especially for mothers. Recently, through a listening session about the historic Canton Grill building, community shared their vision for this space that could and should include a childcare center, as every county in Oregon is a child care desert for at least one age group of children.¹

Since becoming a parent at 19 I have always patched what I could for child care, often relying on a few trusted friends, who were also born and raised in Hawaii, because it's the culturally relevant care I wanted my kids to feel even though I am choosing to raise my family on the mainland. As my friends started to graduate college, I applied for scholarships with big child care centers like the YMCA in Wilsonville and KinderCare in Tanasbourne, but even with scholarships the tuition was often above my monthly rent cost. At the age of 23 I had my second child and in a domestic violent relationship. I felt stuck living paycheck to paycheck and still not qualifying for Employment Related Day Care because my partner was seen as an able person to provide care. I relied on my abusive partner to help me with childcare until I could find an alternative.

Parents are scrambling to find reliable child care options as they continue to work either from home or in their workplaces. Hardest hit are the 350,000 Oregonians (17% of the labor force) who do not work in occupations that allow them to work from home.² Of the options that parents might have, not all of them meet their families' unique needs—like irregular work

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<https://health.oregonstate.edu/sites/health.oregonstate.edu/files/early-learners/pdf/oregon-child-care-deserts-01-29-2019.pdf>

2

<https://oregoneconomicanalysis.com/2020/08/27/covid-challenges-working-oregon-parents-graphic-of-the-week/>



schedules, language spoken, or culturally specific care—and parents across the state are patching together care just like me so they can get to work.

While our state has taken necessary steps and made critical investments to address the child care crisis in the last two years, without continued investment in child care infrastructure - supply-building, facilities, workforce investments, affordability, access - this crisis will continue to have a profound economic impact on those who are already financially vulnerable: the disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color who make up the child care workforce, and low-income and families of color who struggle to access the quality care they need.

- HB 2504 will support the development of a cultural response child care workforce by addressing barriers impeding entry into this workforce by international early childhood professionals.
- HB 2991 will remove unnecessary barriers to professional credentials through our state's Online Registry System (ORO) by addressing issues such as an overly burdensome credentialing process and a lack of linguistically-diverse access.
- HB 3029 will create an incentive and assistance program for the child care workforce that is focused on providing financial support through covering education or licensing costs, to providing housing support to increase recruitment and retention among the child care workforce.

Every Oregon family deserves access to high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care, but in order to do so, we must create accessible, equitable workforce pathways, increase compensation, and stabilize the child care field. House Bills 2504, 2991, and 3029 help us reach this goal and APANO strongly urges your support for these bills.

Sincerely,

Marchel Marcos, Political Director
APANO