

Submitter: Herlin Alvarez  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

April 8, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means  
From: Herlin Alvarez, Salem, OR  
Re: Child Care Funding

Co-Chairs Senator Steiner and Rep Sanchez, Members of the Committee:

My name is Herlin Alvarez. I run a certified child care and am in the process of opening a second location in Marion County. Right now is when providers like myself need help the most.

I have been working in the area of early childhood education for almost 7 years. Throughout that time I have faced many structural barriers that have made it difficult to keep going. When I did child care in a less professional way (un-certified) it was a little easier because I worked alone – but I could only serve a few children. I changed my license to a certified license, and decided to move to a bigger place so I could serve more families. But this is becoming more difficult for us than I expected. One of the main reasons is that I haven't been able to find staff.

We have a huge shortage of child care providers. I think it is due to many things. For example, lack of good financial compensation, a lot of pressure but lack of support from the agencies that regulate homes and centers, lack of adequate staff, lack of financial and educational support for those who want to start, and the list goes on. My child care serves Spanish-speaking families, but there are even fewer Spanish-speaking people for me to hire. This has truly become a crisis, especially for families that need care that is in their home language and that is culturally appropriate for their children.

We have a responsibility to take care that future citizens are in a safe place and that we meet all their needs. But right now it is a very difficult business to work in. I have spoken with other providers who prefer to work alone so as not to have so many expenses and challenges, but that way they cannot provide services to very many children.

Families need access to affordable quality child care so they can be financially secure and thrive. My dream is to open several places in the future, for all the needs that there are. But I can't do this without investment from the state. Child care is

critically important and it needs your support. Please support providers like myself and fund child care this legislative session. If you need to use state savings funding to do it, know that we support you!

Thank you.

Herlin Alvarez