

Submitter: Sky Lockhart

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Measure: SB5506

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

My name is Sky Lockhart and I live in Portland.

Thank you for the opportunity to give input regarding the Oregon state budget. My name is Sky Lockhart, I live in Portland, OR and I am a parent of an eight year old. School does not cover a full work-day and I need after-care for my work schedule. I'm again reminded of the serious gap in child care that I experienced during the first 5 years of raising my son. There is nowhere near enough after-school care for older ages available to meet the need for families, just like there is nowhere near enough care for babies and toddlers.

I am a Social Worker who has served refugee and Native American parents. In both cases, parents experience many barriers to finding child care that is affordable and culturally appropriate. Many of them would be valuable child care providers, but they wouldn't be able to earn enough money to support their families.

This year, we have an opportunity to invest in child care and address some of these barriers. With government funding, we can make child care more affordable. We can support and pay child care providers so that more people will go into this field. And we can put money into building the facilities we need to meet the demand.

The barriers to finding child care that I experienced acutely in my son's 0-5 years of life were the most significant cause of chronic economic insecurity that led to chronic health problems. I live with chronic illness due to the Social Determinants of Health of childcare. This is not an uncommon story. I hear similar ones from parents on my block and at my son's school. We are ALL struggling. We ALL need access to childcare. Which means we need a much larger and stronger child care workforce. I strongly urge you to prioritize child care in the budget so we can take important steps toward a child care system that fills the childcare gap that impacts most Oregon families and childcare providers.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,  
Sky Lockhart