

Submitter: Misha Lind

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 Misha Lind and I am a mother in Corvallis Oregon. I am writing to implore you to prioritize and invest in childcare in the upcoming budget so families like mine can have secure access to quality childcare.

We started looking for childcare providers when I was only twelve weeks pregnant, and the best option we found didn't expect to have a space available for our daughter until she was six months old. Neither of us could take that much time off work and keep our job or pay our bills. In a stroke of luck, my husband got a new job toward the end of my pregnancy and we were able to secure a space in their onsite childcare. We were happy to have care, but we soon began to have concerns about our daughter's safety. Staff turnover was high, communication was poor, and several alarming comments were made about sleep arrangements. At least once, a staff member was asleep in an armchair while holding our sleeping newborn, which is extremely risky. We had worked very hard to practice safe sleep as new parents, and this was so disheartening. We decided to search for a new provider and put our daughter on several waitlists. It took about four months to secure a spot at a more expensive center. I am so grateful to have a provider we trust and the ability to make ends meet (barely), but it didn't happen until she was a year old. Oregon families deserve better. They deserve fully funded, secure, and quality childcare that is not impossible to access or based on a lottery's chance of finding a space. Stories like mine are commonplace and not all end with families finding the right fit, or responsive care they need.

Funding and investing in childcare for Oregon families means stable families and communities. It means people have a choice in their children's care and can rest assured that their children are being looked after and cared for in environments where they can thrive. Oregon as a childcare desert does not serve the needs of our communities, and by investing in and securing childcare for Oregon families you are investing in our future and current communities.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Misha Lind