

Submitter: Nancy Gamino
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

April 8, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
From: Nancy Gamino, Keizer
Re: Child Care Funding

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

My name is Nancy Gamino and I live in Keizer. I have three children who are 17, 13 and 6 years old. When my first son was born, I felt the anxiety of having to look for child care for my son. I worked at a dry cleaners making \$ 7.95 per hour and I would check with family and friends to see if they could take care of my son. I knew that the childcare that I thought was the best was not within our budget. We concluded that it was not worth 75% of my salary to leave my son in an uncertified or educational place, so we decided it was better to stay at home. This brought other economic and social obstacles to our young family. My husband increased 3 hours of work, to replace a part of the salary that I lost. This affected our family, reducing the time he had to be with us and connect with our new baby. These were very difficult times with a lot of stress.

The child care crisis that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic is now a state of emergency for parents, providers, and kids across Oregon. Cost is not the only major problem – even finding child care is a huge challenge. There simply isn't enough child care. Yet it is very difficult for child care workers to get certified, and even when they do they often can't afford to stay in the field. This is even more true for Spanish-speaking child care workers.

Parents deserve good and quality options for early education and childcare. Child care workers deserve good, quality jobs with wages that they can afford to live on. The way our state handles budgeting for the care of our children will affect the next generation forever. Parents need the peace of mind that their providers have enough funding and resources to be safe, and providers need a clear plan and to be properly compensated. I urge you to fully fund our child care system needs.

Sincerely,
Nancy Gamino

Keizer, OR 97303