

Date: 2/5/24

To: Oregon Legislature
From: Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc.
Re: Support for HB 4098

Dear Oregon Legislators:

Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. helps transform the lives of women and girls by building community and economic independence through empowerment, training, career education, advocacy, and leadership development in the skilled trades. We train and prepare almost 100 women annually for the skilled trades and the majority of them enter the construction industry as apprentices. More women (and men as well) would be able to be much needed construction workers if safe, affordable and accessible child care was available.

I am writing to ask you to support HB 4098 Winning CHIPS Funds by Strengthening Child Care. Oregon has an incredible opportunity to win hundreds of millions in federal investment, grow our economy in an equitable way, and make progress toward the child care system we need for Oregon workers and families. With legislative action to strengthen our child care infrastructure in 2024, we can make sure Oregon has the best case in the country to win federal investment.

According to the Oregonian, the construction industry had 6,400 vacancies last fall, trailing only health care among industries with the biggest worker shortages. With net migration into Oregon at a standstill, and many older workers headed for retirement, the construction industry could find itself scrambling to find workers to meet demand. A study by Worksystems showed that over 40% of the 2022 construction workforce is over the age of 45. Between 2022 and 2032, there will be an estimated 6,700 new jobs for the five largest construction occupations (carpenters, construction laborers, electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters, and first line supervisors of construction workers). During the same period, there will be an estimated 38,475 replacement jobs for the same occupations (replacing workers who retire or otherwise leave the industry). Lack of safe, accessible and affordable childcare keeps many potential construction workers out of the industry, and causes highly trained workers to leave the industry.

As you know, having safe and available child care is critical for families to be able to participate in the workforce. We urge you to support HB 4098.

Thank you very much for your consideration,



Donna Hammond, Executive Director
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