



Oregon moms and caregivers fighting for gender, economic, and racial justice.

To: Joint Committee on Capital Construction

From: Courtney Veronneau, Deputy Director of Family Forward Oregon

Date: March 6, 2024

RE: In Support of child care investments in HB 5701 and the -2 amendment

Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey, members of the committee:

Family Forward Oregon is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working to improve systems of care and workplace conditions for mothers and caregivers by fighting for economic, racial, and gender justice. We appreciate the opportunity to share our support for the meaningful investments in Oregon's Employment Related Day Care program included in the -2 amendment of HB 5702.

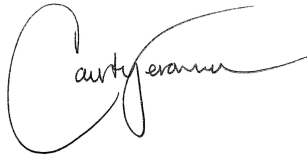
Back in 2020, during the height of the pandemic, a group of lawmakers, advocates, agencies, and child care providers came together in a legislative task force to make a plan that would begin addressing Oregon's child care crisis.

From this plan, Representative Neron and former representatives Jack Zika and Karin Power, created and ultimately helped pass House Bill 3073 in 2021. The bill not only brought all our child care and early learning programs under one roof at the newly created Department of Early Learning & Care, but it also made several important policy changes to Employment Related Day Care, our state's child care subsidy program, to better support families and child care providers.

The policy shifts and investments the Legislature made via HB 3073, have resulted in over 4,000 more families benefiting from this vital program than just two years ago. ERDC went from having one of the highest co-pays in the nation at 20% or more of a family's income, to an average monthly co-pay of less than \$10. And right now, more than *22,000 children* and their families are benefiting from the care and support of a child care provider through ERDC. This is a resounding success!

ERDC has become a program as vital to the stability and growth of our economy as it is to the families accessing it, and we are glad to see the meaningful investments in the program contained in the -2 amendment that will stabilize this critical program for the families who rely on it.

Thank you again for this opportunity to share Family Forward's support for HB 5701 and -2 amendments. We urge your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Veronneau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Courtney Veronneau
Deputy Director
Family Forward Oregon

