

To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
From: Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce
Date: February 11, 2025
RE: In Support of HB 3011

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, members of the committee:

On behalf of the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and Onward Eugene, the economic development partner of the Eugene Chamber, we strongly urge your support of House Bill 3011.

In our regional economic development efforts, we recognize that child care is the workforce behind the workforce. A U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation [study](#) found that breakdowns in childcare cause states to lose an average of \$1 billion in economic activity annually. Part of the lost revenue stems from the cost of parents missing work because quality childcare was not available or accessible. Employers of all sizes and industries across our region site child care as a barrier to recruitment, retention, attendance and productivity. HB 3011 aligns with our efforts to bring cross-sector partners together to elevate promising, effective and sustainable solutions.

Investing in higher education early childhood education (ECE) degree programs and on-campus child care centers is critical to ensuring we have a diverse, qualified and well-compensated child care workforce to serve the needs of today's working families and future generations of Oregonians. Specifically, HB 3011 will support the child care sector in the following ways:

Workforce Development - Oregon is currently facing a significant childcare crisis, characterized by a shortage of accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare/early care and education options. Compounding this issue is the lack of a qualified workforce to support these essential services. This dual challenge impacts families, communities, and the broader economy, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive solutions.

Addressing Shortages in the Sector - The Early Childhood Education (ECE) profession tends to be undervalued, marked by systemic under-recognition and low compensation. Additionally, Oregon's universities and colleges offering these degree programs have faced significant budget cuts, further impacting the ECE workforce pipeline. HB 3011 addresses critical challenges in Oregon's ECE workforce by investing in publicly funded post-secondary ECE degree programs and campus ECE centers. These centers serve as learning labs for students pursuing ECE degrees, and related degrees such as special education, early intervention, psychology, and human physiology.

Opportunities for Improvement in the Sector - Investing in our post-secondary ECE degree programs and centers can build up a qualified workforce and, with sustaining dollars, build up a mixed-delivery model of ECE capacity – capacity that is both affordable and accessible for Oregon families in need of essential ECE/childcare. HB 3011 supports student recruitment, retention, and graduation.

Supporting Oregon's Economic Growth - The profound lack of ECE capacity is an economic barrier holding our families and communities back. A qualified ECE workforce is essential for developing quality ECE capacity, which in turn supports economic growth. HB 3011 is crucial for building Oregon's ECE workforce.

The Request - HB 3011 will build Oregon early childhood education workforce by making a \$20M investment in Oregon's public university and community college infrastructure. Funding would support campus childcare centers that provide hands-on experience to students earning ECE degrees and educational programs based on the ECE degrees produced. Your support for HB 3011 and the workforce behind the workforce ensures a brighter future for Oregon's children and families.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,



Brittany Quick-Warner

President & CEO, Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce and ONWARD Eugene