

Submitter: Lee Belcher
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Lee Belcher, and I'm writing in support of HB5006. I work at the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, so I'm familiar with the enormous impact state-funded programs have on the field of childcare.

Recently, I went back home to Grants Pass and spoke to my niece, a 17-year-old early high school graduate. She wants to operate her own childcare facility someday, but she's already feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of entering an underpaid field and supporting herself while getting the education necessary for such a goal. I used the Workforce Recognition Payment Program as an example of Oregon programs that directly financially support the field. Immediately, I watched relief and excitement cross her face as she realized, yes, the government wants to help fund your goals! There are opportunities available to lighten the load, if you're pursuing a business goal that will benefit your community. So many young people are entering an economy that has felt hostile to their parents, and which they assume will be hostile toward them next. And now they're hearing every day about federal budget cuts and the loss of meaningful jobs in the public sector. We need to show them that Oregon wants them to have a future. Even if the federal government will not invest in us, we will invest in ourselves and protect these vital fields.

Thank you!