

To: Ways and Means Committee

From: Theresa Martinez

Date: 4/4/25

Co-Chair Tawna D. Sanchez, Co-Chair Kate Lieber and members of the the Committee

My name is Theresa Martinez, and I am the CCRR director for Baker, Malheur and Wallowa Counties.

I'm writing to urge lawmakers to invest in critical child care initiatives that will have a profound impact on families, our workforce, and local economies. Specifically, I strongly support allocating:

- \$250 million additional budget allocation to the Department of Early Learning and Care to eliminate the waitlist for Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) and connect 4,000 approved families with child care providers.
- \$14 million for HB 2452 to fund Child Care Resource and Referral Directors, ensuring families can find suitable care options.
- \$16 million for HB 3008 to continue recognition bonus payments to child care providers and invest in workforce apprenticeship programs.

These investments are crucial to stabilizing the entire child care ecosystem and addressing long-standing issues plaguing our system. By doing so, we can ensure that all families, regardless of income level, have access to affordable and high-quality child care options that meet their unique needs.

As a CCRR we are finding that we are losing child care providers because they are sitting with open slots that are not filled, and we have families who qualify for ERDC and could use these slots, however, they are stuck on a waitlist, and can't work due to not having child care. I support these bills because they will help families to find affordable quality child care, and support the child care providers who are open, stay open.

I urge you to allocate these critical funds to support child care infrastructure and ensure that all families have access to quality child care. This investment will have a lasting impact on our communities and our state's future.

Thank you,

Theresa Martinez