

To: Ways and Means Committee

From: Jean Bergeron

Date: 4/7/2025

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

My name is Jean Bergeron and I am a child care provider and community member from Bend Oregon.

I've known several families who have not been able to work due to not getting ERDC due to the wait list. Without ERDC, they can't afford childcare, therefore they can't go to work. This is devastating for many families. I also know several providers who can't fill their spots because families can't get ERDC and this is really impacting those providers. Many are considering or have already closed their doors. If I were in a position to add children to my program, I'm concerned that I would not be able to fill my spots due to the ERDC wait list. I will be facing this situation later this year when I will be ready to add more children to my program. I feel like we need to remedy this situation immediately.

That is why I'm writing to urge lawmakers to invest an additional \$500 million for the Employment Related Day Care Program in SB 5514, the Department of Early Learning and Care agency budget. Investing an additional \$500 million dollars in ERDC is crucial to stabilizing the entire child care ecosystem and is essential to addressing long-standing issues plaguing our child care 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 our unique needs. This investment will have a ripple effect throughout our economy, supporting small businesses, creating jobs, and stimulating local economic growth.

In addition to providing child care to families and supporting our child care workforce, I support this bill because I believe in the importance and urgency of child care for all families.

I urge you to allocate an additional \$500 million dollars for the ERDC program in the Department of Early Learning and Care budget.

Thank you,

Jean Bergeron

Bend Oregon

