

To: Ways and Means Committee

From: Erica Younghart

Date: 4/8/2025

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

My name is Erica Younghart, and I am a daycare provider who mostly cares for children in the ERDC program.

I am 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 have seen the impact having this program benefits parents to go to work/ school, I depend on programs like ERDC to also continue providing childcare for families. I specifically became a childcare provider wanting to provide care for those in ERDC. In doing so I only keep my rates at the rates of ERDC. The majority on private pay struggle with the rates even though they are on a lower end. I usually have parents reaching out needing care but then realizing they can not afford care and are on the waitlist, upset and worried, not knowing when they will be approved and be able to return to work.

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,

Erica Younghart, owner and provider of Little Leaves Daycare
Sweet Home, Oregon