

To: Ways and Means Committee

From: Jennifer Lukashev

Date: 4/8/2025

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

I am a family child provider in Florence. Our entire community has been impacted greatly by the ERDC wait list. Families in our community cannot afford to pay for child care and it is affecting our ability to maintain a work force in the community. Providers have the financial burden on our backs as we are forced to give discounts to families so they can go to work. Many of us have openings in our program or are accepting part time spots to maintain some enrollment. We are a severe child care dessert in Florence and some of us are struggling to earn a living wage. This may cause us to close our doors and leave families without care. Our community cannot get doctors and nurse positions filled without child care programs being available. Families are struggling and living in poverty since they cannot find jobs to earn enough to offset paying for child care costs out of pocket. It is a heart breaking cycle for families and children. There have been abuse cases because families are placing their children in unlicensed programs who are charging well below average rates. Families have had no choice but to place their children in these programs with unqualified individuals and they are unsafe. Something needs to be done to give these families the financial stability they need and for these children to be protected in quality programs.

I am pleading to you to please 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.

Thank you,

Jennifer Lukashev  
Florence Oregon