

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emileni Lopez and I am a Research and Education Coordinator with PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. 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, we 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.

Our members voted to make child care a priority for this legislative session. At PCUN, we believe that strong childcare is the basis for a strong workforce.

As a community member concerned about the well-being of local families and an advocate for education and workforce development, PCUN supports these bills because they will enable our members to continue working/studying while knowing their child is in good care.

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,

Emileni Lopez
Research and Education Coordinator
PCUN