

2/4/25

Testimony in support of HB 4057

House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Scharf and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Yamamoto, my pronouns are she/her and I am the Child Care Organizer at APANO Action Fund (AF), a culturally-specific organization that unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to build power, develop leaders and advance equity through organizing, advocacy, community development and cultural work.

I am writing to urge you to pass HB 4057 to require the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to share key information about early learning programs with families. We know that there is a child care crisis in Oregon right now: **all but one of the 36 counties in the state are considered child care deserts.**

On top of this lack of available seats, finding information about programs is not easy, particularly for parents juggling multiple children, jobs, and responsibilities. According to Oregon State University, **90% of Oregonians felt that finding affordable, high-quality child care was difficult** in 2024.

HB 4057 would ensure that these families seeking care are aware of all of their options and resources. Families are stretched thin, and the rising costs of child care mean that **it is imperative that families are aware of their publicly-funded program options.** Without knowledge of programs like Preschool Promise and Head Start, families may be forced to pay upwards of \$1700 a month per child for child care alone. For some families, these costs are more than their monthly rent. With **12,000** families connected to the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program, and another **15,000** on the waitlist, **the need for these publicly-funded options is clear.**

Creating and funding early learning programs can be life changing for families, but only if they are aware of these opportunities. **I call on you to pass HB 4057** so that no child is left behind simply because families didn't know their options.

Thank you,
Michelle

Michelle Yamamoto
Child Care Organizer
APANO Action Fund