

Submitter: Trillium Ward
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1507

My name is Trillium Ward, and I am a parent.

Oregon families and child care providers are sounding the alarm: our state's Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program is on the brink of collapse. With a projected \$88 million shortfall and the program at risk of shutting down by January 2027 without intervention, the consequences will be catastrophic — not just for working parents, but for our entire economy.

I'm writing to urge lawmakers to use reserve funds to backfill the \$88 million deficit for the Employment Related Day Care Program.

If the ERDC program runs out of funding, the consequences will be immediate and severe: parents will be forced to make impossible choices—such as cutting back on essentials or pulling their children out of care altogether. Childcare providers, many of whom operate on thin margins, will face closures or reduced capacity as families can no longer afford their services. This isn't just a budget line—it's a crisis in the making, one that hits working families hardest and threatens the backbone of our local economy. Child care is integral to our infrastructure and a necessary public investment; it's time we treated it like one.

I support ERDC because I used to rely on the ERDC, and it played a huge role in helping me lift myself out of poverty. I was a struggling single mom raising two children while working in social work, providing direct care for kids in foster care and the criminal justice system. Affordable daycare through ERDC made it possible for me to keep working, even though the low wages in social work meant I still depended on state services to feed my kids and work toward a better future. While completing my apprenticeship through IBEW Local 48, I continued to use these services. Now, I'm earning a journey-level wage and can fully support my family on my own. These programs are essential for giving people a real path out of poverty, allowing them to give back more than they take. I'm proud to be paying taxes now to support programs like this, which can truly change the course of someone's life.

It's pouring in Oregon. I urge you to use revenue and reserves to close the \$88 million shortfall for the ERDC program in the Department of Early Learning and Care budget.

Thank you,
Trillium Ward