

Submitter:

Lia Mills

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB1507

My name is Lia Mills, and I am a mother currently receiving ERDC.

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 am a community member and mother of two young children living in East Portland. For the past 2.5 years, I have been on waitlists for various childcare subsidy programs, struggling to secure safe and reliable care that would allow me to work and create stability for my family.

The Early Learning Division's ERDC program has been a lifeline. Access to ERDC has allowed me to begin building a pathway to self-sufficiency while ensuring my children are cared for in a safe, nurturing environment. Without this support, I wouldn't be able to work, attend appointments, or protect myself and my children from the ongoing risk posed by an abusive partner.

Reliable childcare is not a luxury, it is essential for parents like me to provide safety, stability, and opportunity for their children, while also building independence and a future free from harm. By supporting ERDC, you are directly helping families escape cycles of poverty, violence, and instability, while giving children the safe environments they need to thrive.

I urge the committee to continue funding ERDC. Programs like this save families and help them build safer, more secure futures.

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,

Lia Mills