



SENATOR BRUCE STARR SENATOR DICK ANDERSON PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 9, 2025

Contact: Ashley Kuenzi, Communications Director

Ashley.Kuenzi@oregonlegislature.gov

Senate Passes Bill to Unlock Preschool Opportunities for Families Across Oregon

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the Oregon Senate unanimously passed [Senate Bill 1099](#), a bill aimed at addressing the shortage of childcare and preschool options across the state. Chief sponsored by **Senator Bruce Starr (R-Dundee)** and **Senator Dick Anderson (R-Lincoln City)**, SB 1099 updates Oregon law to add preschools and prekindergarten programs to the list of activities churches can offer in areas already zoned for religious use. While churches can currently provide childcare for kids ages 0 to 3, preschools for older children aren't allowed, leaving valuable spaces underutilized during the week.

“For many Oregon families, it is extremely challenging to find adequate child care for their children. This bill offers a small, but important opportunity to increase childcare capacity without requiring new facilities from the ground up. Virtually every community in Oregon has at least one church with Sunday School classrooms that are empty Monday through Friday. This bill creates an easier path for churches to bring preschools into their facilities and serve Oregon’s children,” said **Senator Starr**.

Families with pre-school age children living in 27 of Oregon’s 36 counties live in what experts have defined as a [child care desert](#), an area where demand for childcare far exceeds the available supply. In these communities, there are more than three children for every regulated childcare slot.

“Our state urgently needs more childcare providers at all levels—infants, toddlers, and pre-K. We can’t ignore the demand. Many churches already offer safe, community-centered environments that are underutilized during the week. This bill leverages those spaces, cutting red tape so kids have a place to learn and grow, and parents can work with peace of mind. It’s a crucial step toward solving Oregon’s childcare shortage,” said **Senator Anderson**.

SB 1099 now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

###