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Oregon House Votes to Retain and Stabilize Oregon's Child Care Workforce

House Bill 4005 will address Oregon's child care workforce shortage and help parents in search of reliable child care options

SALEM, Ore. - Responding to the growing need for more affordable child care, today the Oregon House passed [House Bill 4005 B](#) to help to stabilize child care workforce and infrastructure in order to support working families across the state.

“As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, we must continue to build a system where every family can find care so our children have joyous, reliable, and meaningful early childhood experiences,” said [Representative Karin Power](#) (D-Milwaukie), chief sponsor of the bill and chair of the House Committee on Early Childhood. “We can only reach this goal if child care providers and workers are paid well for their essential and difficult work. This is an important step towards that goal.”

Specifically, the legislation will increase the amount of money providers who accept Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) subsidies receive per child, getting to more equitable compensation rates. This will also increase purchasing power for parents who utilize ERDC.

The legislation comes in response to a child care provider shortage, driven in large by inadequate wages and compensation for this workforce. The shortage has also impacted working families', and especially moms', ability to find reliable and accessible child care. Pre-COVID Oregon had a child care capacity of 128,819 slots and every county was a child care desert for at least one age group. Currently, our system has capacity to serve 102,394 children, or a sustained loss of around 20%.

“I'm proud to support our child care workforce. As a mom and educator, nothing is more important to me than supporting families and our children,” said [Representative Courtney Neron](#) (D-Washington County/Wilsonville). “If we want our small businesses to succeed—and for our working families to climb the economic ladder—we need to understand that child care is essential infrastructure. Just like roads, bridges, and public safety, without child care, our communities struggle to thrive.”

The legislation will also provide more resources for Oregon's new Department of Early Learning and Childcare to ensure that state-level systems and supports are in a position to support this foundational underpinning of our State's economy.

HB 4005 is an important piece of a larger child care package that will include recruitment and retention payments to childcare workers; recruiting and training of new childcare providers; direct grants to expand existing childcare facilities; and other investments to make our public childcare system more equitable for parents.

The bill passed 52-7 and now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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