



February 1, 2023

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 599
Regan Gray, Child Care Policy Advisor for Family Forward Oregon
Senate Committee on Housing and Development

Dear Chair Jama and Members of the Committee:

If you talk with any parent or child care provider, they will say that the child care crisis that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic is now a state of emergency. While there are myriad issues that contribute to the dysfunction of our child care market, one of the most pervasive issues is the lack of supply across the state, whether families live in urban or rural areas. There are a number of tactics the state could use to help address our supply issue, one of which is providing protection to child care providers operating in rental homes, as addressed in SB 599.

The current state of our child care supply is dire. More than 50% of Oregon's pre-covid child care slots are gone. And 40% of providers are closed, unlikely to ever reopen.¹ Parents are scrambling to find reliable child care options as they continue to work either from home or in their workplaces. Parents – especially mothers – across the state often find themselves patching together care with friends and family just so they can get to work. The pandemic has laid bare how the lack of access to child care has led to negative impacts on women's workforce participation and economic security. The child care crisis is especially hurting those who are already financially vulnerable: the disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color who make up the child care workforce, rural and urban communities, and low-income and families of color who struggle to access the quality care they need.

In order to increase the supply of home-based child care providers and meet families' unique needs, lawmakers must help these child care providers by passing Senate Bill 599. This bill will provide rental protections for home-based providers who rent and operate child care businesses out of their homes.

The protections provided by SB 599 will help providers stay in business in both the short and the long run. They and the families they serve depend on it. Senate Bill 599 is one step we can take to increase access and equity in our child care system and Family Forward Oregon strongly urges your support for this bill.

¹ <https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregons-childcare-system-faces-uncertain-future/>