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March 25, 2019

House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Senator Tim Knopp
900 Court St. NE S-309
Salem, Oregon 97301

Representative Cheri Helt
900 Court St. NE H-371
Salem, Oregon 97301

Representative Jack Zika
900 Court St. NE H-387
Salem, Oregon 97301

Regarding: Support HB 3237, relating to a tax credit for childcare workers continuing education.

Dear Chair Nathanson, Sen. Knopp, Rep. Helt, Rep. Zika, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce, representing 1,300+ members with over 25,000 employees of diverse industry and size, we extend our support of HB 3237 to create a specific tax credit for workers at childcare facilities rated three stars or higher with quality rating and improvement system.

Like many parts of Oregon, Bend is in dire need of childcare. Our region is growing rapidly, but childcare providers are not, resulting in the designation of a “childcare desert,” according to a study by Oregon State University and Portland State University. Only about 3,000 child care spots are available for the 9,000 children who need care in Deschutes County. *Two thirds* of our areas infants and toddlers do not have access to a regular spot in child care—which has obvious impacts on the working families that makes up Central Oregon's small business and entrepreneurial economy.

The Bend Chamber is working on this complex issue on multiple fronts with many community partners to address this tough issue. As you know, childcare workers are required to have high levels of education and certifications, yet they only earn on average between \$16 and \$18/per hour. We need to support these workers through other means, and this small tax credit is a needed tool in the toolkit for solving this issue.

We need additional quality childcare now. Please support HB 3237 to help give some needed relief and help ensure the quality of care for our children remains strong.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Katy Brooks
CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce