

Angelina Klouthis
Portland

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business, my name is Angelina Klouthis, I am a resident of Portland, and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1652.”

I am 6 months pregnant and desperate to find a childcare provider for my future child. Given my professional position at the City of Portland, I think I may be one of the most resourced individuals when it comes to identifying childcare options. I planned my pregnancy and began adding my name to childcare waitlists before conception. I am on over 20 different waitlists in the Greater Portland area. My spot ranges from 145- 28.

Because of my privileged position, and connections to childcare providers I have asked what supports they need to address the childcare desert in Portland. They have shared with me time and time again, that it is impossible to retain employees. Childcare providers are experiencing some of the lowest wages in the state and they do some of the most important work in our children’s lives.

COVID has pushed many moms out of the workforce. As of February, the Department of Labor data showcases that nearly 3 million American women have left the labor force over the past year in a coronavirus-induced exodus that reflects persistent pay inequality, undervalued work, and antiquated notions of caregiving. These numbers are even more shocking for Hispanic and Black moms.

This bill address both recruiting and retaining essential workers. Childcare providers are the backbone of our economy-- I can't work, unless I have childcare options. This bill will clearly help facilitate that for working moms like myself.