



Laura Smit Emerald

Withney Workman (center), 6, and her classmates listen to their teacher read a story at the Child Care and Development Center. A new bill will help parents pay for child care and tuition by receiving one of the 250 grants available each month.

Child care

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many supporters of the bill, said state funds will help cut the waiting list almost in half and provide more families with child care.

"Cutting the waiting list in half wouldn't solve the problem of student parents not being able to afford health care, but it would be a step in the right direction," said Joell Lester, the OSA interim executive director.

EMU Child Care Coordinator Dennis Reynolds said that even with a student discount, the students who bring their children to the EMU Child Care and Development Center are still paying \$155 a month for daycare for children younger than age three. Any other daycare would cost \$700 a month for children of the same age, he said.

"This bill will help parents a lot," Reynolds said.

The bill is sponsored by State Rep. Jackie Winters, R-Salem, who has been working with the OSA and the Oregon Commission for Child Care on getting the bill to the House floor. This is the second time through for this bill, which did not make it to the House floor for a vote during the 1999 legislative session.

Billy Dalto, a legislative aide to Winters, said that no legislators oppose the bill for ideological reasons.

"The only problem with passing it is the cost," Dalto said.

Dalto said the bill is an enhancement, meaning no money was added to the program in Gov. John Kitzhaber's budget for the year.

“A lot of students now have kids, and this is a way to provide them with the means to an education and care for their children.”

Vicki Walker
state representative,
D-Eugene

Kitzhaber did add \$50,000 in state-generated revenues to the \$1.9 million that is funded by the federal government, and he plans to add another \$500,000. But supporters of the bill say this is not enough, and that the bill is needed to boost funding for student parents.

"The governor's additions would bring the funding to \$2.3 million, but the bill requests at least \$3.8 million," said Marc Overbeck, the executive officer for the Oregon Commission for Child Care.

Legislators such as state Rep. Phil Barnhart, D-Eugene, and state Rep. Vicki Walker, D-Eugene, support the bill and hope the funding can be provided.

"The age of students has changed over the years," Walker said. "A lot of students now have kids, and this is a way to provide them with the means to an education and care for their children."

Barnhart, who said he has supported the bill since he first heard about it and plans to sign on as a co-sponsor, also wonders about the funding issue.

"The key problem is: Can we find the money in our tight budget to support this bill?" Barnhart said.

Lester said the legislative budget is particularly tight this year, and the revenue for March was \$100 million less than the Legislature anticipated.

"It's always a challenge — the legislators have to sort through so many bills with a limited amount of money available," Lester said.

Despite the financial strain, Lester said this bill would lead to future generations of better-educated and better-employed Oregonians by helping student parents afford their college education and related expenses.

Overbeck said as each grant spot is filled, a spot on the waiting list is also filled, and the demand for grants continues.

"We hope to have affordable child care for all families by the year 2010," Overbeck said. "By expanding the Student Block Grant, it gives us a further piece of the mosaic."

tices after Justice Richard Jameson's resignation last week, wants to use its time to review the cases thoroughly.

"We have a little more time than we thought we had," he said. "We all want to make sure we make the right decision."

“We all want to make sure we make the right decision.”

Rob Raschio
chief justice,
ASUO Constitution Court

Each of the hearings will have a slightly different format, but all petitioners and respondents will have the chance to present their cases and to answer rebuttals by the other parties. Hearings could run between one and two hours, and possibly longer.

Stephanie Chaney, the Elections Board publicity coordinator, said she hopes the hearings will ensure that the next election held has a "speedier" and "cleaner" outcome and will eliminate confusion for students and candidates.

Although some people have been concerned about the election's postponement, Justice Alan Tauber said the delay is necessary to ensure all the parties involved get their due process.

Tauber added that he hopes no one leaves feeling as though they had an unjust trial.

"We hope that at the end of the process, everyone feels like they got a fair say and hearing," he said.

The court will also exercise its discretion to hear other interested parties who may submit Amicus briefs, written arguments supporting one side. Briefs will be accepted only for the grievances filed against the Elections Board and MCC until 4 p.m. today.

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Hearing

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measure. The senators said the measure's wording violates the authority of the Programs Finance Committee, the senate and a law created by the U.S. Supreme Court less than a year ago. During the hearing, Sen. Mary Elizabeth Madden will represent herself and the other four senators.

Jarrett White's grievance against Brooklyn and Nair accuses the two of using ASUO phones to make campaign calls, and Steven Lockfield filed a grievance against the Elections Board for an error involving a senate seat position.

Although no decisions will be made today, Chief Justice Rob Raschio said the final outcome should be known by April 2. The court's decisions will ultimately determine which candidates and measures will appear on the ballot in spring term's general election. Raschio said the court, which is made up of four jus-