



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BUSINESS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS UNITE TO DELIVER
STRONG WARNING ABOUT OREGON'S CHILD CARE CRISIS**

February 25, 2019 (Baker, OR) – Without increased access to affordable, high-quality child care, the children, parents, economy, and taxpayers of Oregon will suffer, and the infant-and-toddler child care crisis will continue.

That was the top-line message of a new research report, **“Want to Grow Oregon’s Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis,”** released yesterday in Baker City. At the release, ReadyNation Member Kim Moiser, Attorney At Law; Kelly Poe, Director of Community Services, Malheur ESD; Theresa Martinez, Early Learning Coordinator/Preschool Promise Director, Malheur ESD and Martha Brooks, State Director of the two bipartisan non-profits, ReadyNation, a business-leader organization with over 2,000 members nationwide and 50 in Oregon, and Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, an anti-crime organization composed of 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and violence survivors nationwide, with 138 members in Oregon, detailed Oregon’s acute need for affordable, high-quality child care.

Oregon’s “child care deserts,” or areas where care options are scarce or nonexistent, are a component of a crisis that costs our country \$57 billion every year. Baker County is one of those “child care deserts.”

Citing the report’s findings, Kim Moiser highlighted that “a survey of more than 900 Oregon parents of young children showed that over half said that finding affordable care was one of the main challenges of being a parent,” noting the massive need for quality care in Oregon.

She pointed out that there are about seven infants or toddlers for every licensed child care slot in Oregon, adding that this “reflects not only the inadequacy of child care options in our state, but also the massive need for quality care: In Oregon, there are about 138,000 children under age three, and 59 percent of mothers of infants work outside the home.”

Moiser added that child care issues create significant financial losses for families, businesses, and taxpayers, all of which combines to generate that massive \$57 billion figure nationwide. She also noted that having strong supports during a child’s earliest years is crucial, as ages zero to three are a time of unique brain development.

Martha Brooks reiterated the great need for child care in Oregon, stating that “almost two-thirds of Oregon’s 169,000 children under the age of six have all available parents participating in the

workforce, and, therefore, need some form of non-parental care.” Brooks added that there’s also a connection to public safety concerns, stating that child care “is a vital resource for young children and their families, and high-quality care can have important, positive impacts that help kids now and in the future.”

“Research tells us over and over that children who are able to complete their education and grow up and get a job are much less likely to turn to a life of crime. Child care is an important support to keep children on the right path toward being more prepared for school and toward becoming a productive member of society,” she added. Finally, State Director Brooks highlighted quality as an important factor in fighting the child care crisis, noting some recent, high-profile safety issues Oregon care providers have experienced.

The speakers all noted that, in addition to far-reaching economic impacts, the child care crisis can have negative effects that may harm children for many years to come.

To learn more and read the full report, visit <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/848-want-to-grow-oregons-economy-fix-the-child-care-crisis>.

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