

JACKIE DINGFELDER
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 23



OREGON STATE SENATE
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

To: Senate Health Care, Human Services and Rural Health Policy Committee
From: Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Senate District 23
Date: February 10th, 2012

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 1567

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee, thank you for hearing SB 1567 and for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of this bill.

In a more perfect and fair world, after a lifetime of work each older Oregonian would have the means to cover all his or her expenses. These seniors would have no trouble paying their rent, electricity bills, medical and prescription costs, and they would still have plenty of money each month to purchase food. However, the recession has been difficult for everyone, and far too many seniors in Oregon have to make grim choices such as purchasing their medications or purchasing food. For these seniors, there is something we can do to help—we can expand the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program (S-FDNP).

S-FDNP provides vouchers to low-income seniors, which they can then use to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets and roadside stands. This helps seniors have access to a more nutritious diet, and we can support local farmers at the same time. S-FDNP is a key senior health program, but current funding levels only provide vouchers to about half of all eligible Oregon seniors. With the modest increase in funding called for in SB 1567, we can provide vouchers to another 10,000 low-income seniors.

Through my work with the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force I've learned that a lack of sufficient nutrition in seniors is often associated with dizziness and falls, which can cause injuries requiring a walker, wheelchair, or even costly nursing or hospital care. With SB 1567 we can help low-income seniors purchase the nutritious foods they need and, ultimately, these seniors can have a better chance of staying healthy. I ask that you join me in supporting Oregon's seniors through the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Dingfelder".

Senator Jackie Dingfelder