

**JACKIE DINGFELDER**  
**STATE SENATOR**  
DISTRICT 23



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

To: Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services  
From: Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Senate District 23  
Date: March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 456**

Chair Monnes-Anderson and members of the committee, thank you for hearing SB 456 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, far too many seniors in Oregon often have to choose between simple expenses that many of us take for granted, such as deciding whether to purchase food for tonight's dinner or a week's worth of necessary medication. 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 fresh, nutritious food while at the same time supporting local agriculture by providing additional customers for over 700 farmers across the state. S-FDNP is a key senior health program, and in 2012, the program served over 31,000 seniors in every county in Oregon. However, current funding levels only provide vouchers to about half of all eligible Oregon seniors. With the modest increase in funding called for in SB 456, we can provide vouchers to an additional 6,000 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 diminished health, which can often lead to dizziness and falls, or cause injuries requiring a walker, wheelchair, or even costly nursing or hospital care. With SB 456 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  
Senate District 23