

Improving Oregon's TANF Program to Promote Economic Opportunity *and* Provide Safety Net for Needy Families

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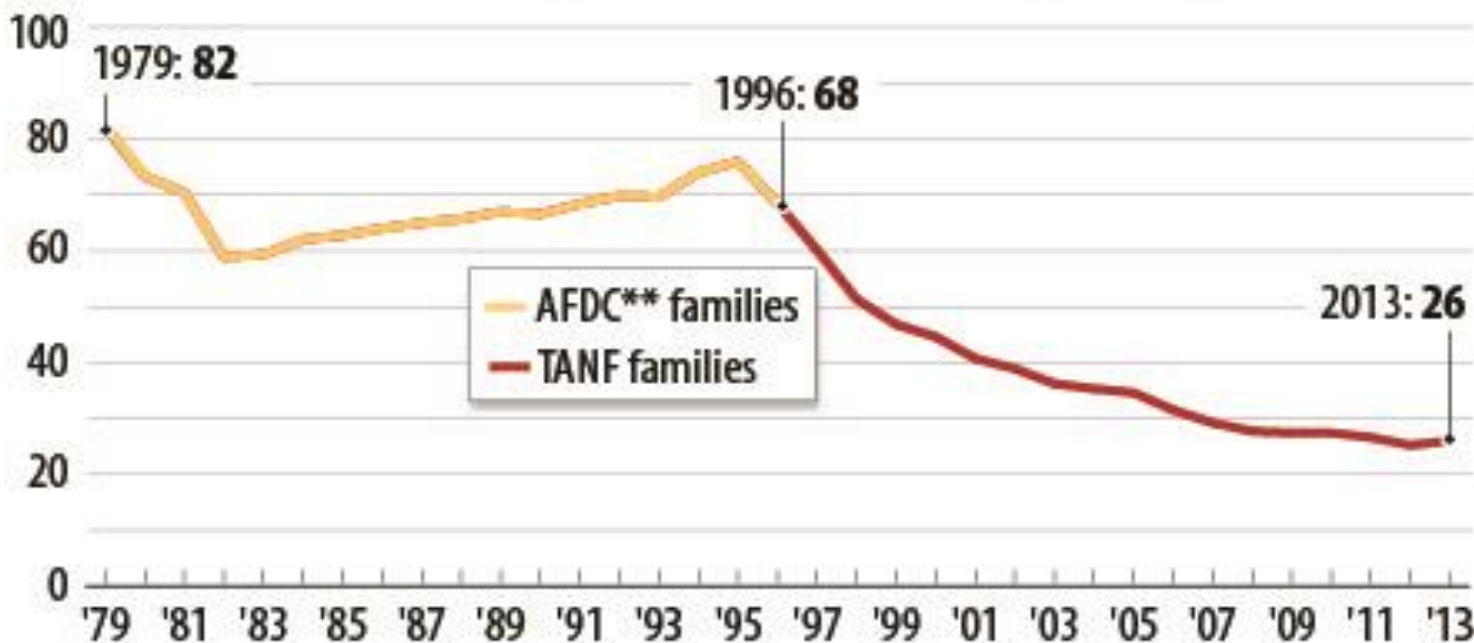
Before the House Committee on Human
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- How does Oregon's performance under TANF compare to rest of the nation in providing a safety net, particularly in recession response
- How well do proposals meet the principles of creating a stronger cash safety net and providing better employment opportunities to TANF recipients and other deeply poor parents?

Nationally, TANF has weakened as a safety net for poor families

TANF's* Role as a Safety Net Has Declined Sharply Over Time

Number of families receiving AFDC/TANF benefits for every 100 families with children in poverty



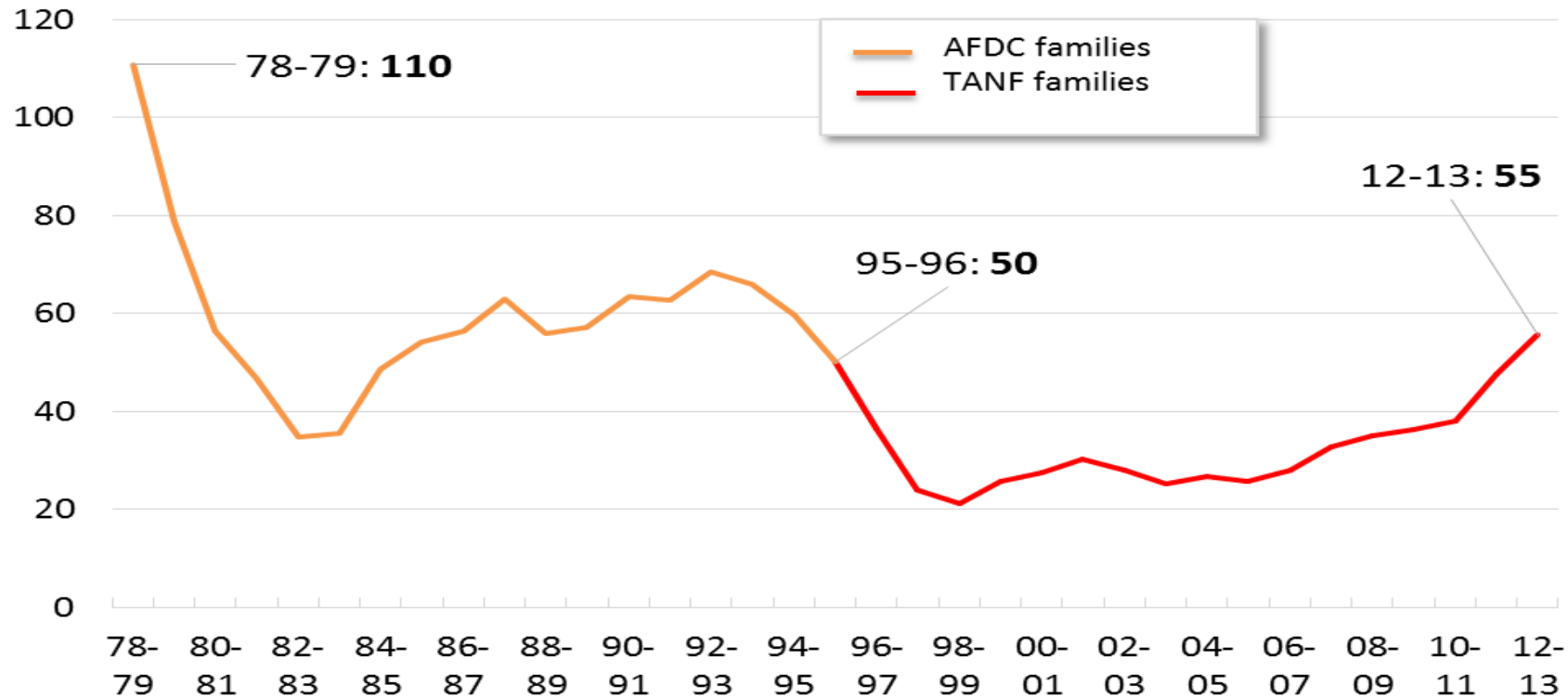
*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

**Aid to Families with Dependent Children

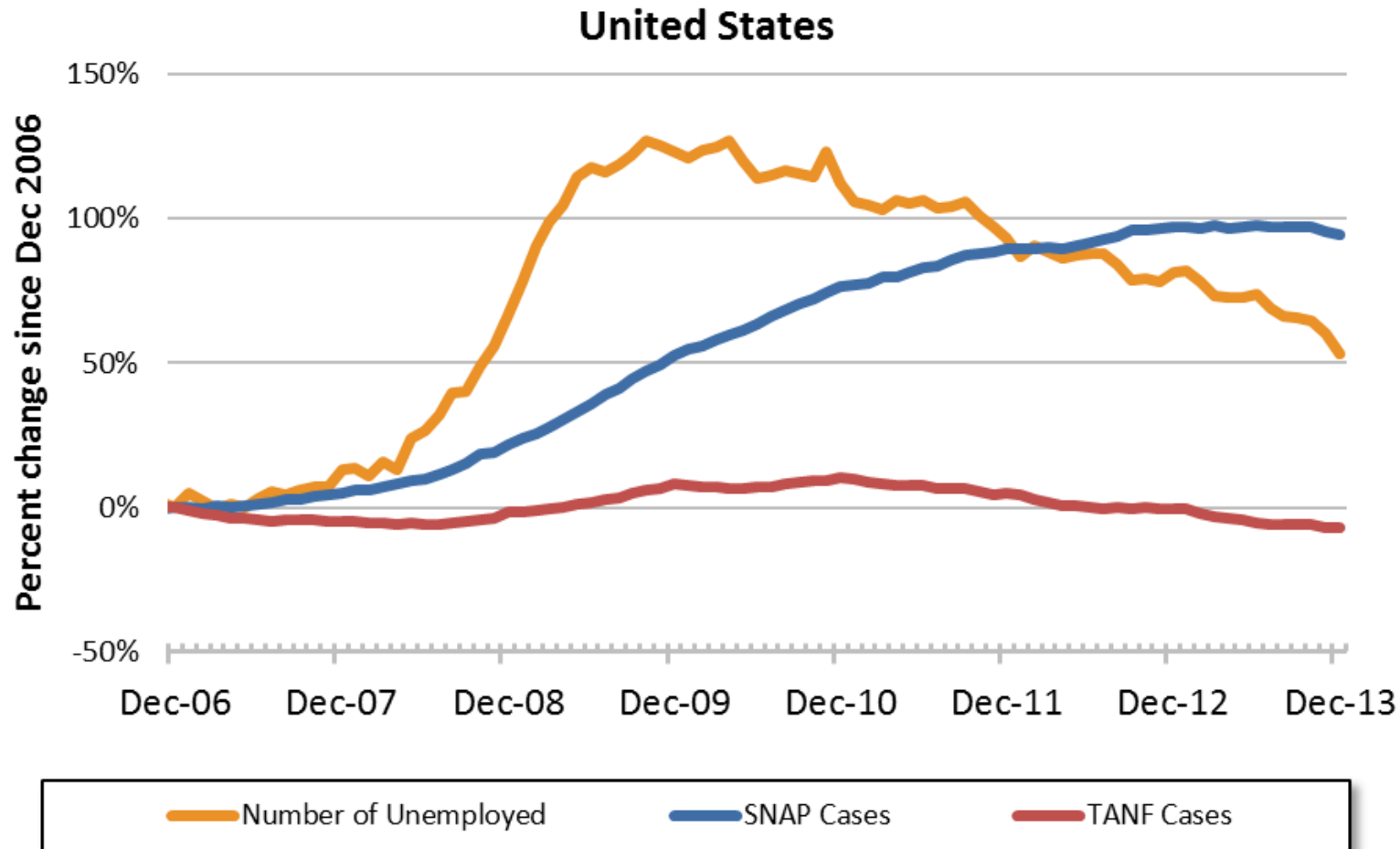
Source: CBPP analysis of poverty data from the Current Population Survey and AFDC/TANF caseload data from Health and Human Services and (since 2006) caseload data collected by CBPP from state agencies.

TANF provides a somewhat more robust safety net in Oregon but many poor families are not served

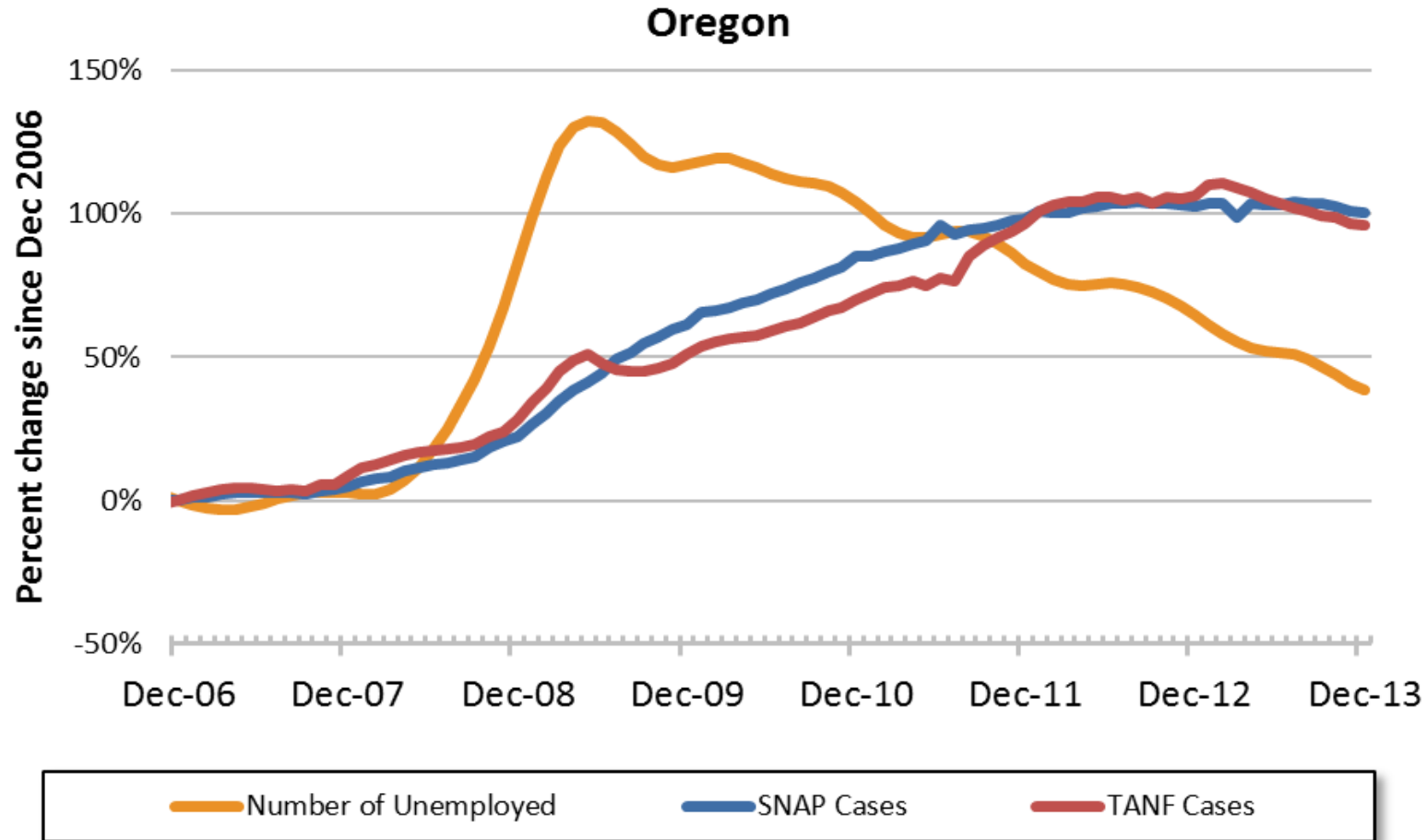
Number of families receiving AFDC/TANF for every 100 families with children in poverty in Oregon



During the recession, on a national level, TANF responded only modestly to increased need



Oregon's TANF caseload responded significantly to increased need during the recession – one of the best responses in the country

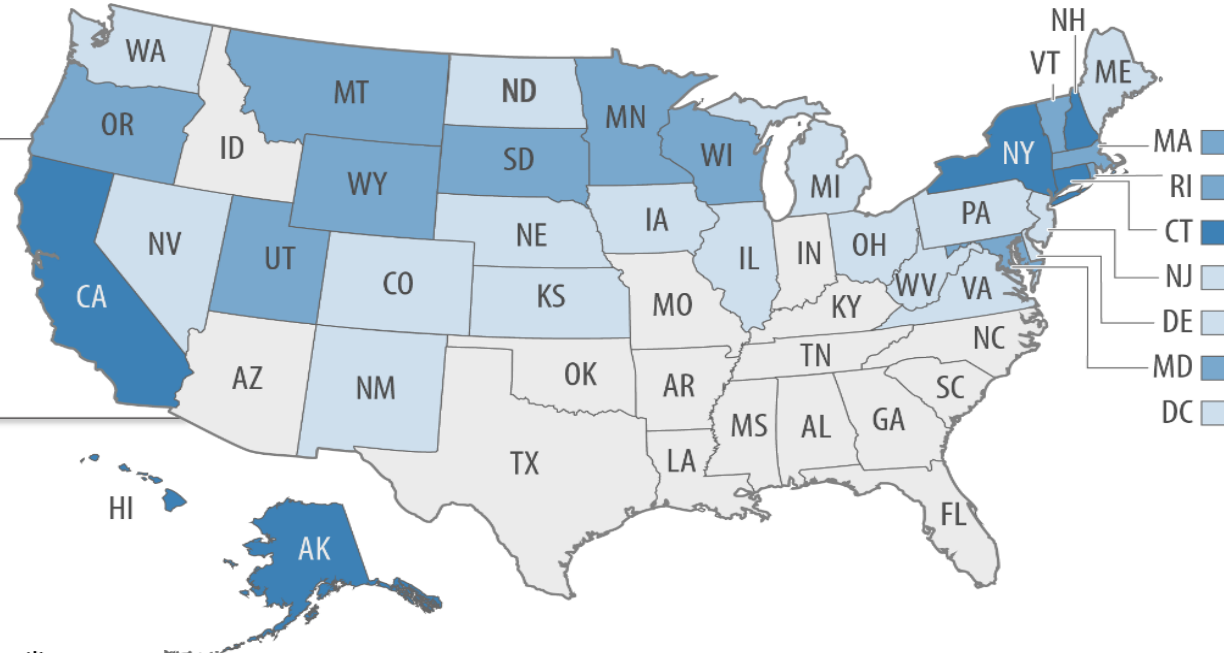


TANF benefits in most states leave families far below the poverty line

Maximum TANF* Benefits Leave Families Well Below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Maximum TANF benefit
 as a percent of FPL
 (For a family of three)

- 0 to 10 % of FPL
- 10 to 20% of FPL
- 20 to 30% of FPL
- 30 to 40% of FPL
- 40 to 50% of FPL



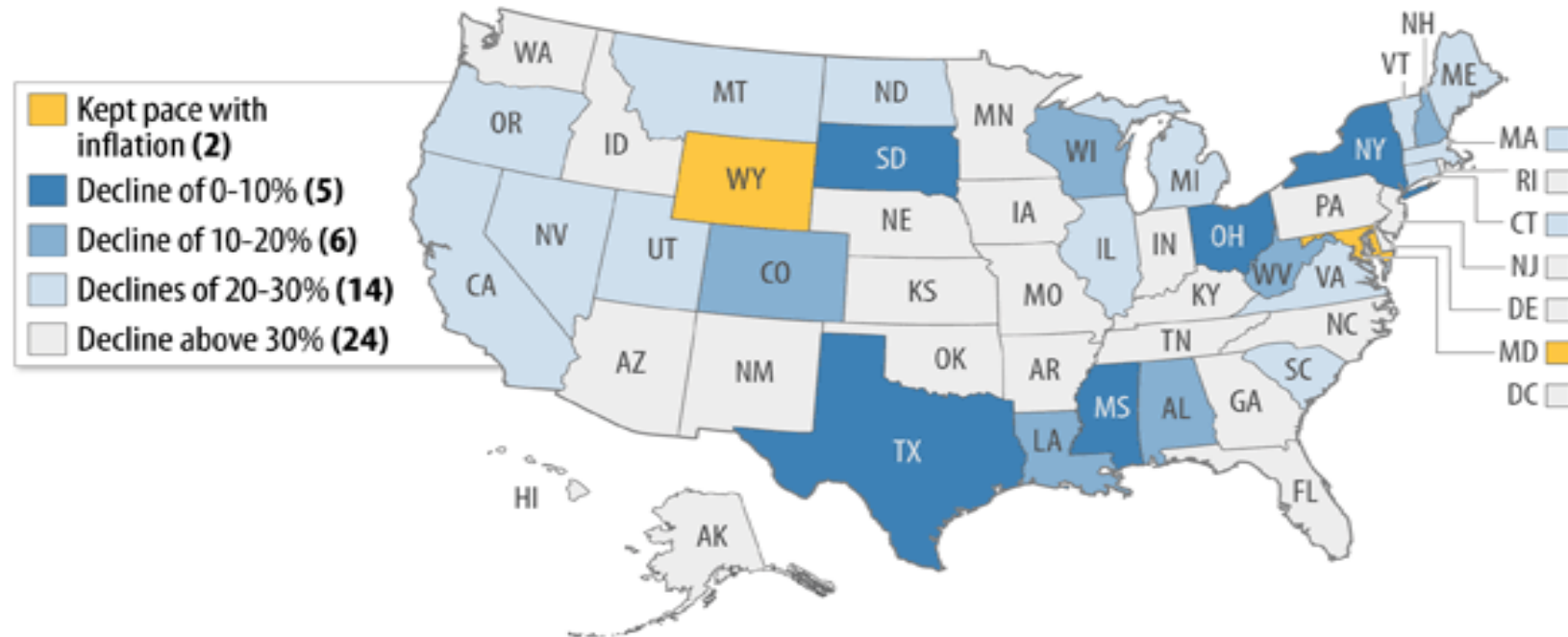
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Note: Hawaii and Alaska FPLs are higher than the other 48 states.

Source: Calculated from 2014 HHS Poverty Guidelines and CBPP-compiled data on July 2014 benefit levels.

The value of benefits has declined by 27% in Oregon since 1996

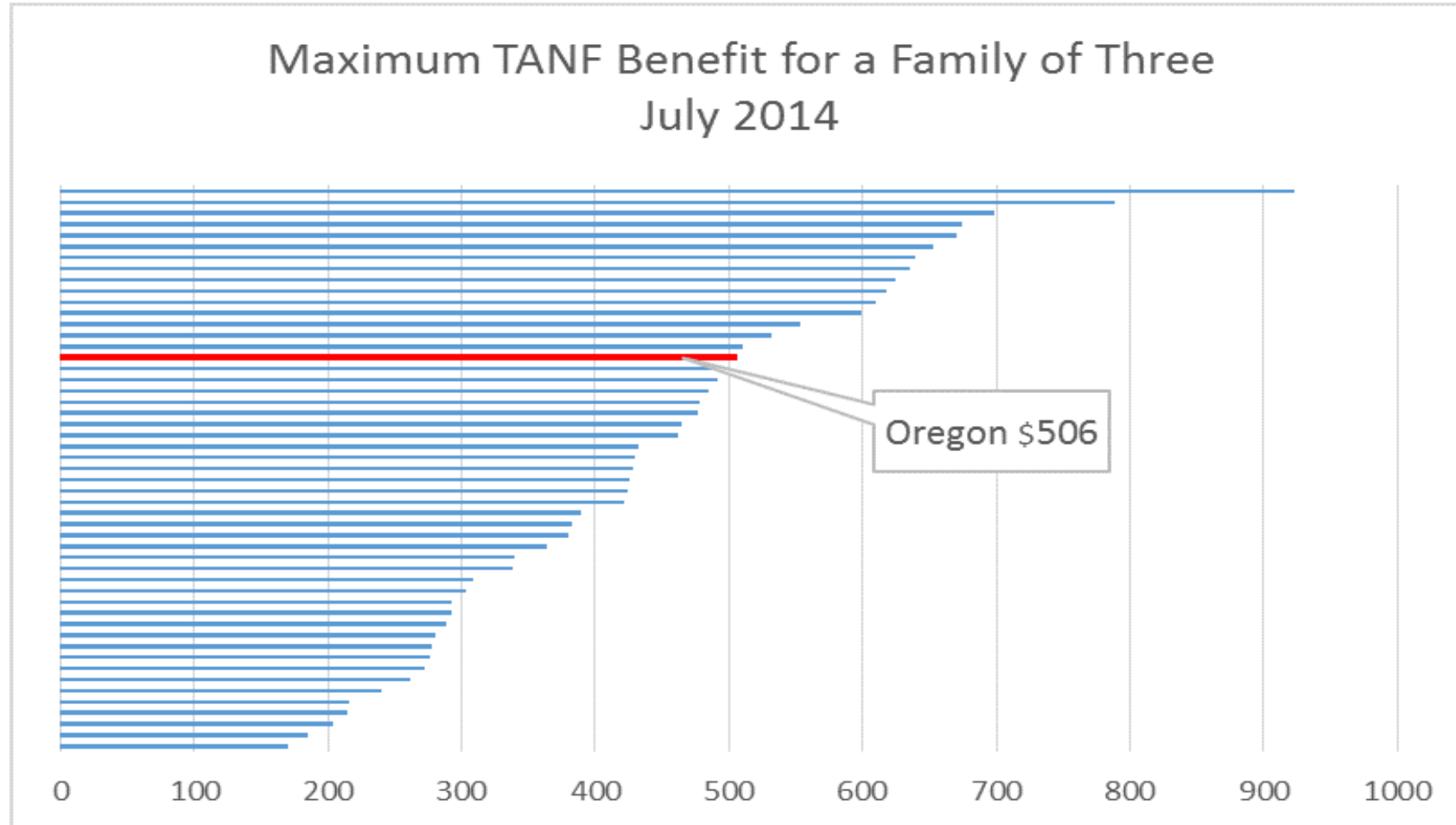
TANF* Benefits in Most States Have Declined in Value Since 1996



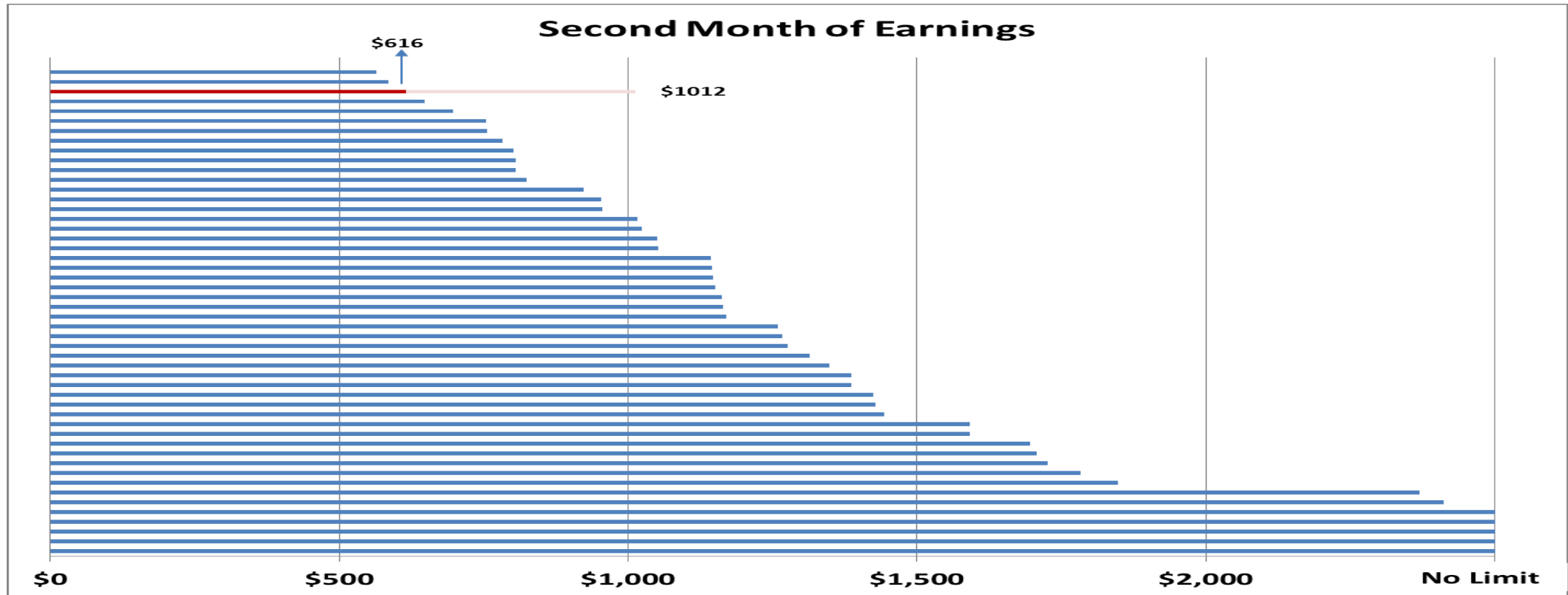
*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Source: Calculated from Congressional Research Service (for 1996) and CBPP-compiled for 2014 benefit information adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

**Oregon's grant levels are among the top 20
in the country, but they only bring families to
30.7% percent of the poverty line**



But Oregon's income cutoff for families that go to work is one of the lowest in the country



Principles to Consider for TANF Program Proposals

Safety net

- Access to and adequacy of benefits to provide stability for children's positive growth and development
- Time limits do not deny families aid when they are unable to work because of individual circumstances or economic conditions.
- Assistance does not immediately end when a parent finds a job
 - eligibility exit levels
 - transitional supports

Principles for TANF Program Proposals (continued)

Work-related programs

- Recognizing the diversity of the caseload, TANF supports multiple pathways to work including array of education and training programs that can lead to higher-paying and more stable jobs.
- Individual expectations are realistic, taking into account strengths, goals and employment barriers.
- The program is flexible enough to adapt to changes in and respond to the realities of local labor markets.