

# Making the Safety Net Work: The Role of TANF

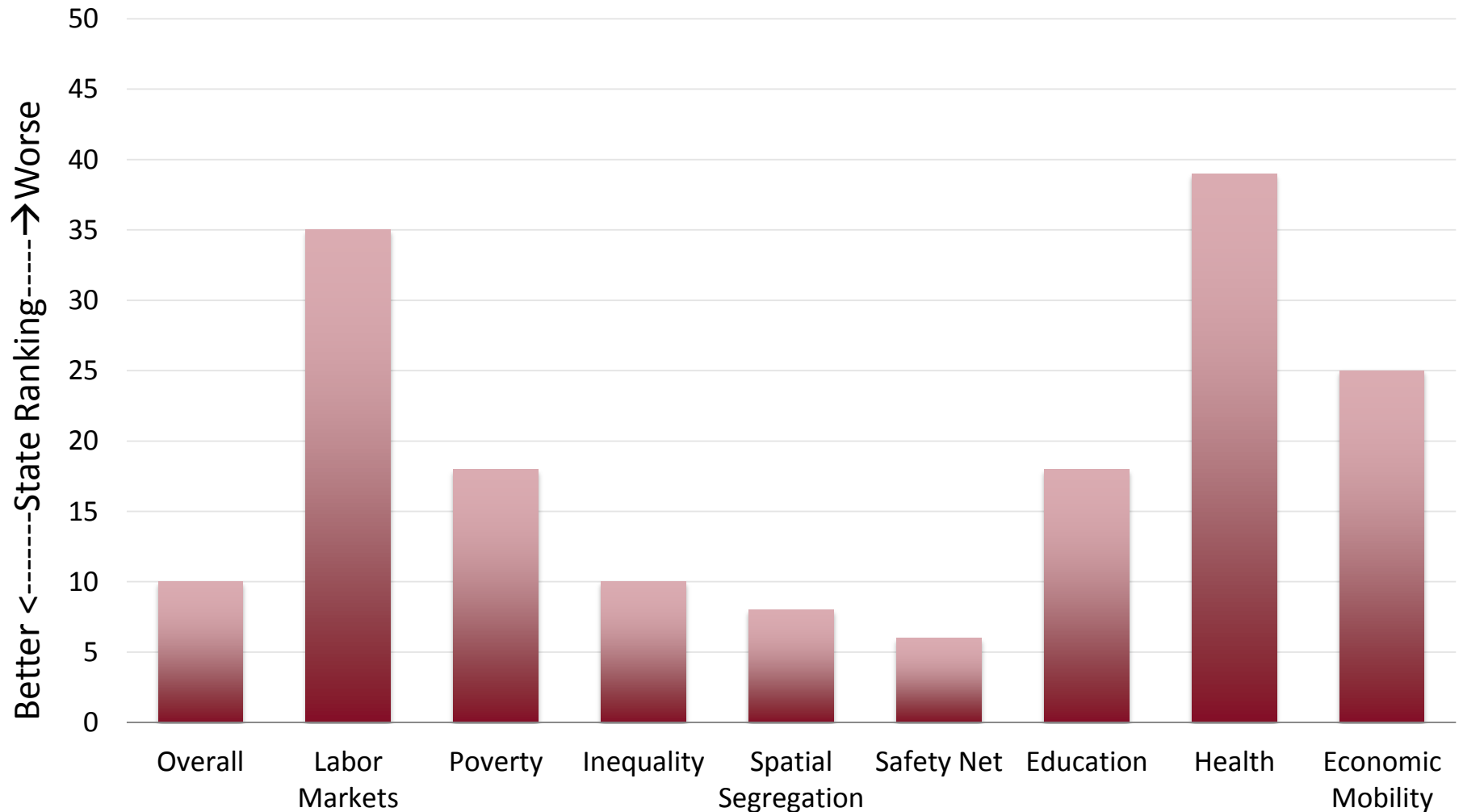
February 2015

# Context

- Oregon Business Plan set a goal reducing poverty to below 10% by 2020
- ECONorthwest authored a December 2013 strategy paper that called for safety net redesign
- An OBC Poverty Taskforce identified TANF redesign as a policy priority for the 2015 legislative session

# Stanford Center's view of poverty and inequality in Oregon

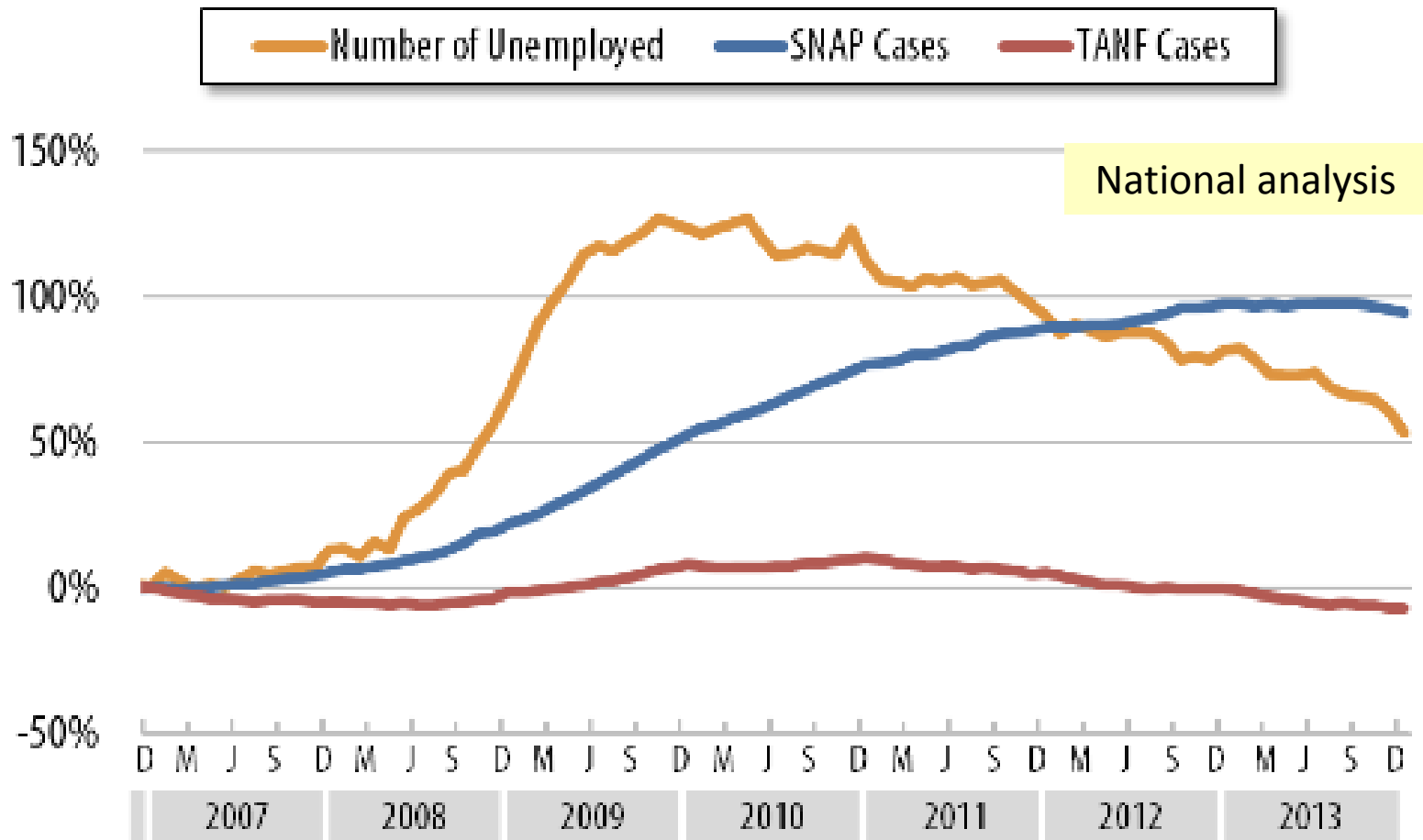
## Oregon's Rankings on Poverty and Inequality



# Oregon's TANF Program

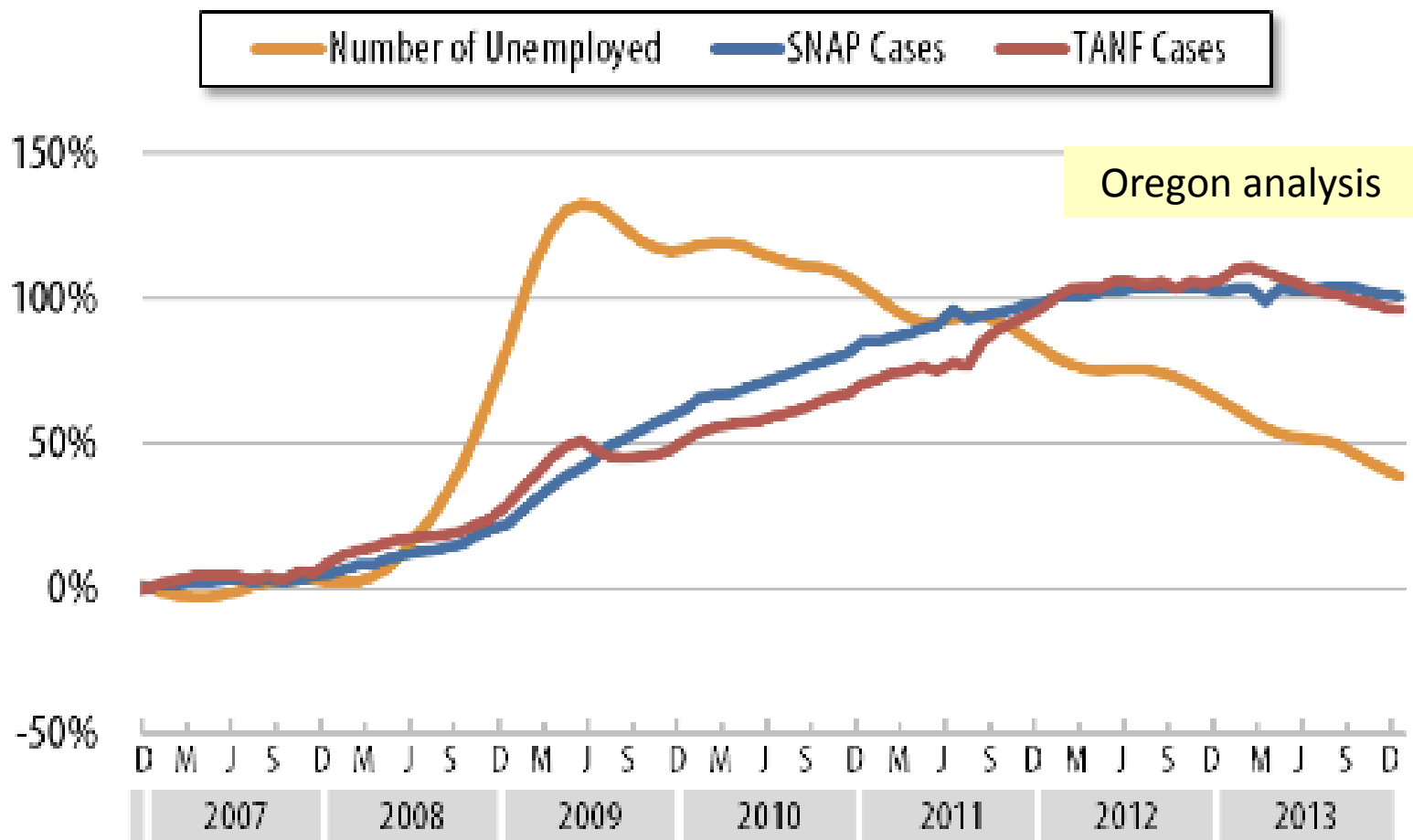
- Unlike most states, caseloads increased during the economic downturn
- Maximum benefit levels are above the US median but have eroded with inflation
- Eligibility ends at low levels of earnings

# Nationally, TANF caseloads were unresponsive during the economic downturn



Source: CBPP analysis of state TANF caseload data (see more below), Agriculture Department SNAP household data, and Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment data.

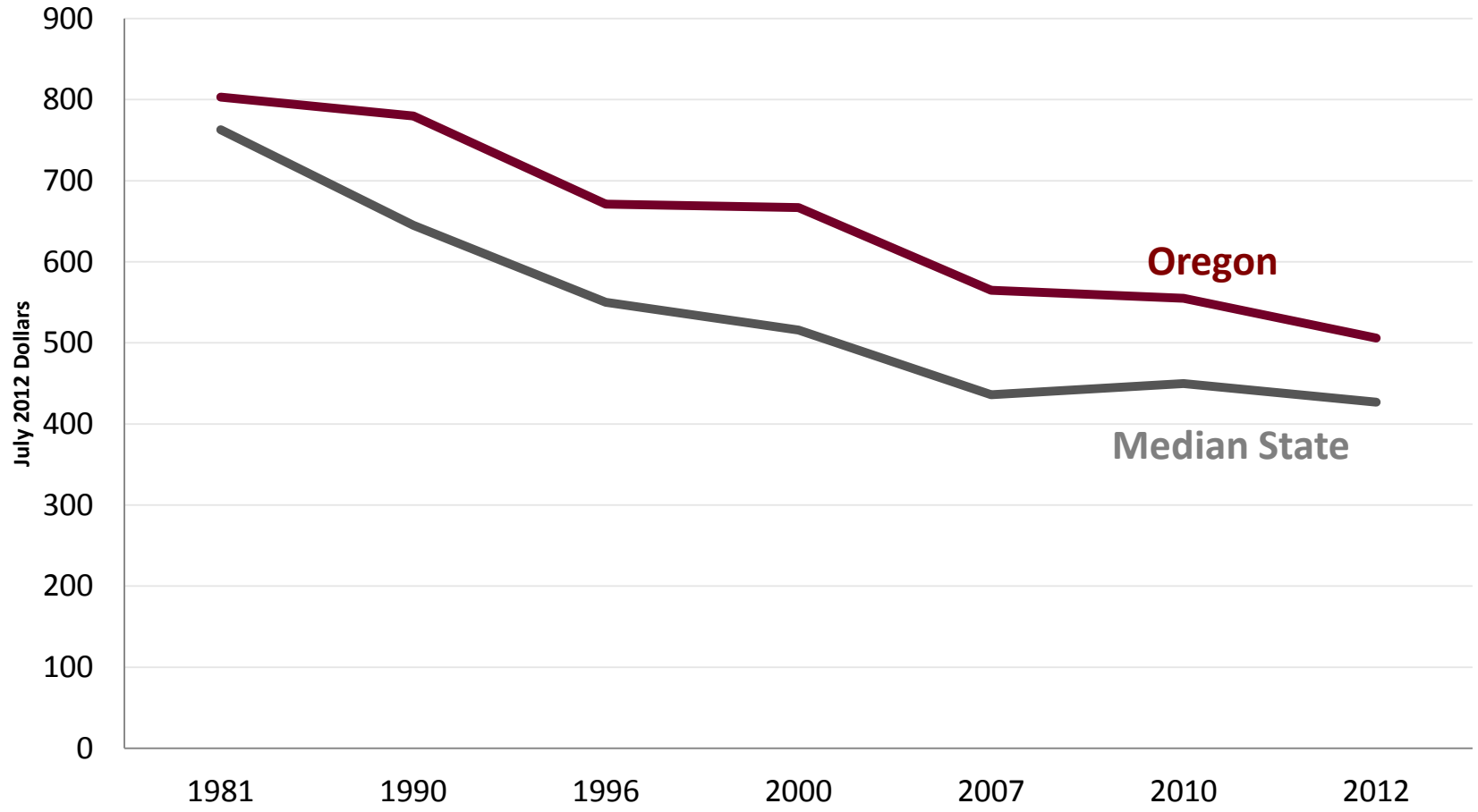
# In Oregon, TANF caseloads grew at rates similar to the SNAP program



Source: CBPP analysis of state TANF caseload data (see more below), Agriculture Department SNAP household data, and Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment data.

# Oregon's maximum TANF benefits are above median but have eroded with inflation

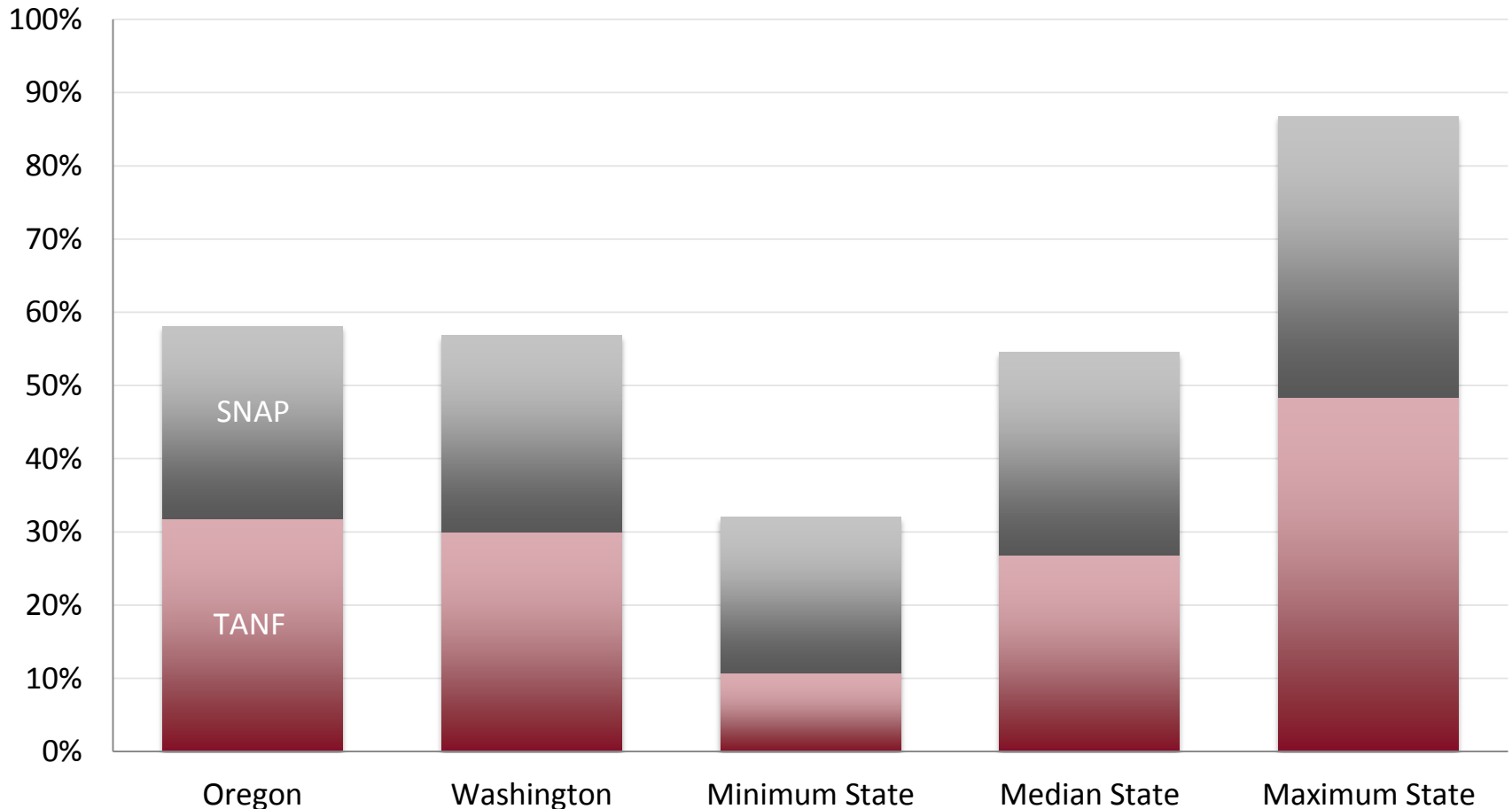
**Maximum Monthly AFDC/TANF Benefit for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children, Constant July 2012 Dollars**



Source: Falk, Gene. Congressional Research Service. July 2014

# Combined TANF+SNAP benefits are close to the national median

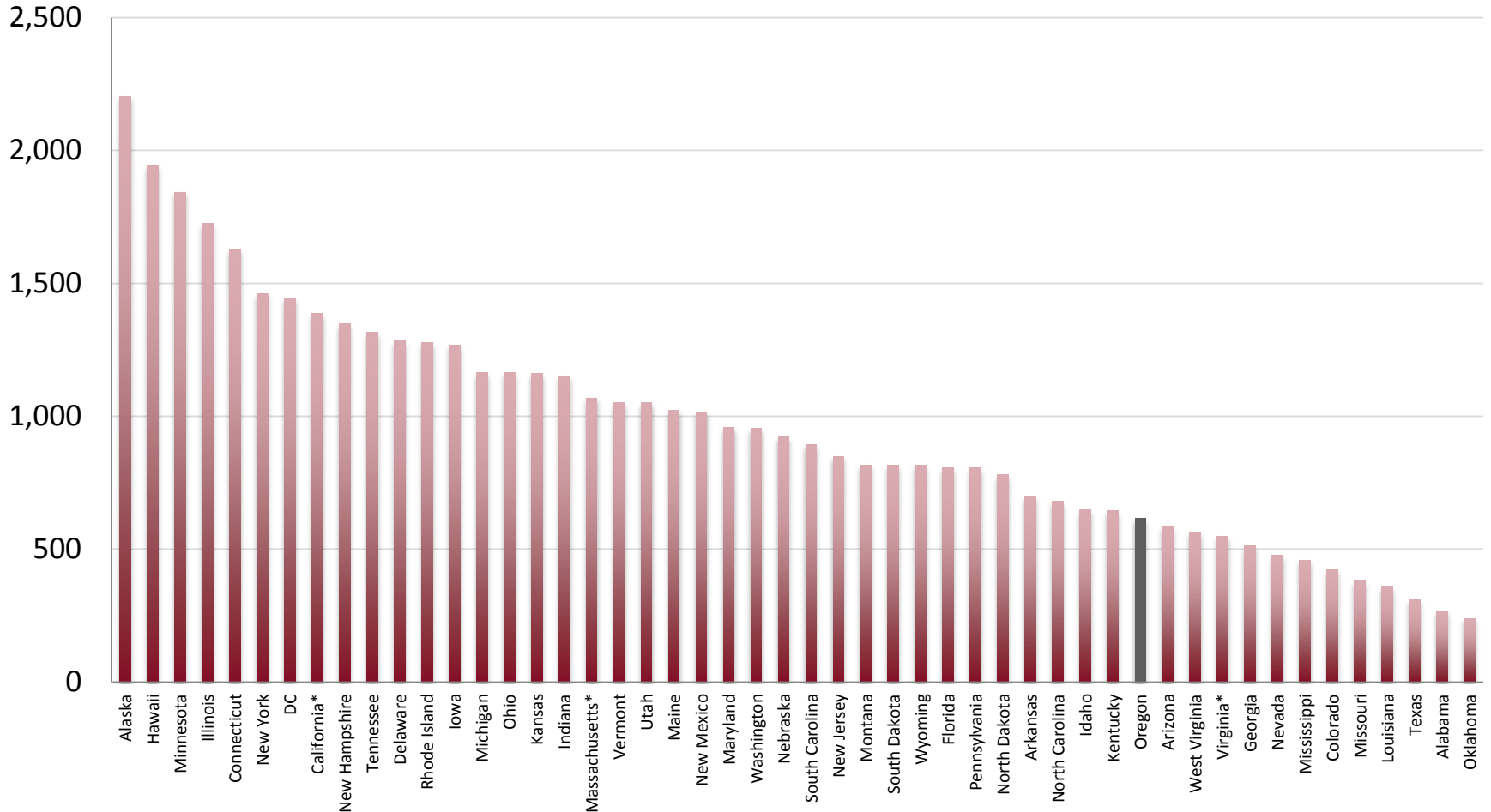
**Maximum Combined TANF/SNAP Benefit for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children, July 2012, Percent of 2012 Federal Poverty Level**





# TANF phases out at low levels of earnings

Maximum Income for Ongoing Eligibility for a Family of Three,  
July 2013



# Opportunities for Redesign

1. Increase the TANF income limit to smooth the transition to work
2. Evaluate the adequacy of the maximum TANF-SNAP benefit level—today and into the future
3. Develop work programs and requirements that serve the diversity of labor market conditions across the state

# An Imperative

- Consider TANF redesign from the client's perspective and in the context of related programs:
  - SNAP
  - Employment-related daycare
  - Child support
  - Taxes and tax credits
  - Housing assistance

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