

House Committee on Human Services and Housing
February 25, 2015
HB 2029

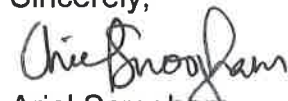
Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the committee;

I first started receiving TANF when I had a child at 19. I was homeless and couch surfing, and I needed to pay a portion of my rent or I would have gone to a shelter. TANF provided me with \$500 a month, which I used for housing and other necessities for my family of four. The \$500 a month kept us out of a shelter, but I struggled every month to get by. I would pay all of my bills immediately, and that left me with nothing for other basic needs. I was resourceful and bartered and helped other people in exchange for items we needed. I went to other agencies for support, such as getting interview clothing from Dress for Success. But there was nothing extra -- not even a 50 cent toy for my son. We were on TANF for 10 months, and then my children's father got a job.

I enrolled into a JOBS Plus program and got an internship at 211info. My caseworker and I checked in every week, and we would discuss how I was doing. I wanted a job -- I wanted so badly to make money for my family to be successful. When I completed my internship, I was hired full time. I now have money for the essentials -- and also to pay for my son to have a birthday party and my daughter to get a doll at the store. I have worked for 211info for nearly three years, and I've advanced in the organization. I am 211info's Foreclosure Specialist for the state of Oregon, I manage community resources in the database, and every day I get to provide assistance and offer hope to callers who may be experiencing what I have gone through. Every day I take calls from people who are experiencing situations similar to what I went through. Every day I help individuals and families problem solve so they can access everyday essentials like diapers, personal hygiene products, gas money, bus tickets and even the ability to participate in a family activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 2029.

Sincerely,



Ariel Scrogam