



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

March 3, 2015

Joint Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee
Sen. Alan Bates and Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chairs

Re: HB 5026 – Department of Human Services - Support

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League has a national position on Meeting Basic Human Needs which promotes self-sufficiency for individuals and families and invests in social programs designed to prevent or reduce poverty.

The League supports the redesign of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families to raise the benefit level and to increase services for clients in the transition to employment. The goal should be to stabilize the parent in employment and self-sufficiency. The Employment Related Day Care payments are a critical piece in the stabilization.

The anti-poverty programs assist parents who are temporarily unemployed or disabled and choose not to apply for financial assistance. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Food Bank programs help all low income persons survive. The Housing and Energy Assistance programs, through the Oregon Housing and Community Services, help in emergencies and times of loss of income or relocation.

The League acknowledges the increased staffing levels in Child Welfare and the improvement in the number of placements with relatives. The Prevention work with the Early Learning programs, such as Healthy Start and Relief Nurseries, should help keep children in their own families and decrease the need for out of home placements.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program is a resource for older teens who may be on their own and need a safe place to live while they complete school and find jobs. Again, these are prevention programs. These teen shelters can aid in pregnancy prevention and provide stability and support while teens emancipate. Thus, DHS has a multi-faceted approach to provide stability to children, young adults and families.

The League also supports in-home services for Developmentally Delayed children and adults in order to assist families in their care and to maintain their independence in the least restrictive environment. Likewise, we support Oregon Project Independence in its efforts to keep seniors and disabled adults in their own homes. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this agency budget.

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