

Advocacy Coalition

of Seniors and People with Disabilities 5517 7th Avenue SE Salem OR 97306

Date: March 4, 2015

Re: HB 2194 – General Assistance Pilot Project

Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing

Chair Keny-Guyer,

My name is Bill Olson, Co-Chair of the Advocacy Coalition of Seniors and people with Disabilities. The Coalition consists of approximately 80 individuals and organizations. Our purpose is to protect and promote services for the low income elderly and people with disabilities. In support of that mission, we focus on legislative and budget issues that impact those populations.

The Coalition submits this testimony in support of HB 2194 as an important step toward the possible restoration of a General Assistance program, funding for which was completely eliminated in 2005. The bill creates a general assistance pilot project to be administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) which would sunset in January 2019.

Among other things, the pilot project would authorize DHS to provide “assistance or services to needy persons ...not otherwise provided for to the extent of such need and availability of funds... Such assistance and services can be critical in enabling persons encountering hardship due to poverty to receive such cash assistance and services to meet critical needs pending the receipt of assistance for which they have applied; and for which DHS determines they are likely to be eligible. These individuals are typically the poorest among us.

Please approve HB 2194 and refer it to Ways and Means with a positive recommendation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Bill Olson, Co-Chair,
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Cc: Committee Members: Rep Knute Buehler; Rep Paul Evans; Rep Joe Gallegos; Rep Cedric Hayden; Rep Julie Parrish; Rep Carla Piluso; Rep Duane Stark; Rep Kathleen Taylor

Advocating for Services Oregonians Can't Live Without