

Making the Safety Net Work: The Role of TANF

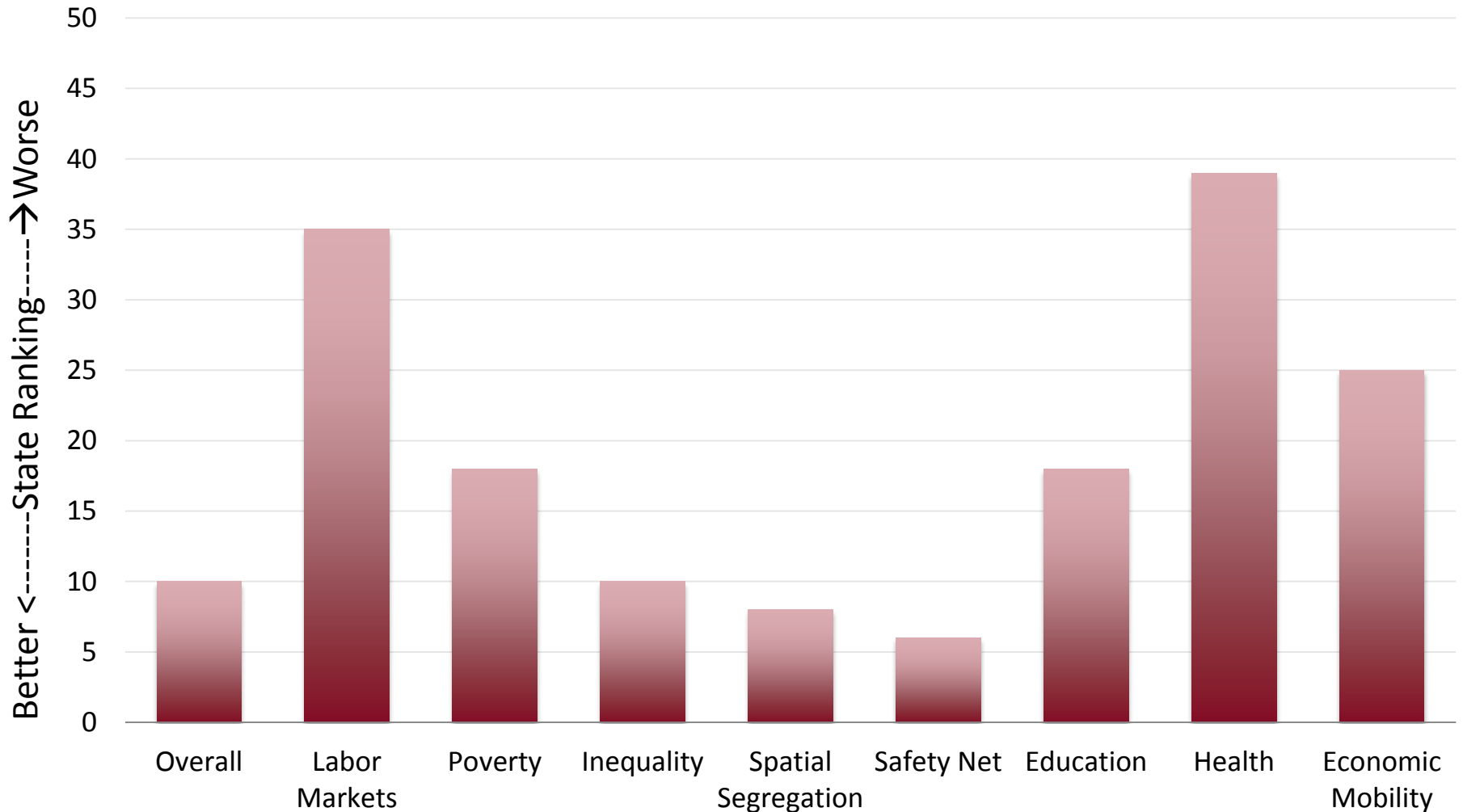
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March 2015

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

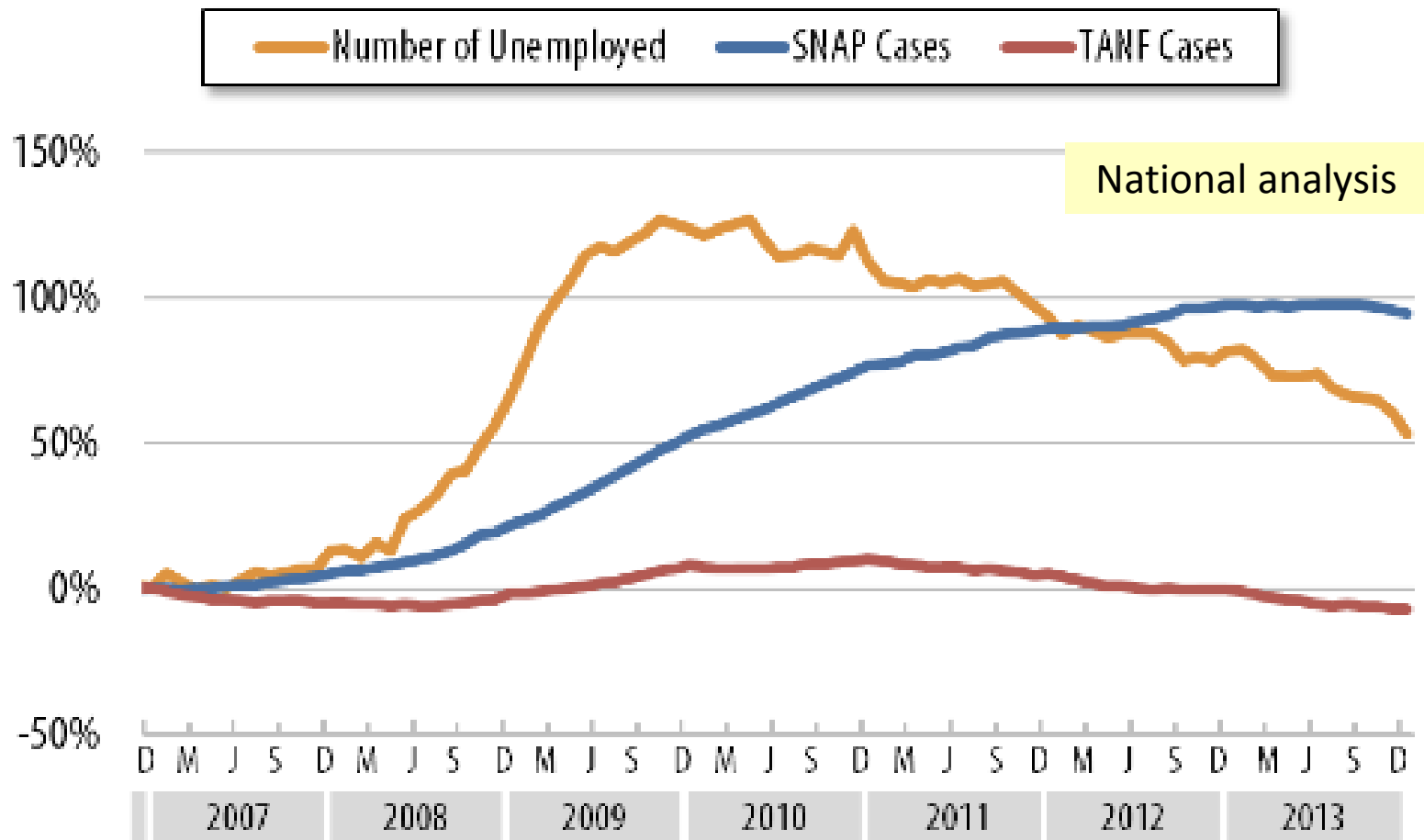
Oregon's Rankings on Poverty and Inequality



Oregon's TANF Program

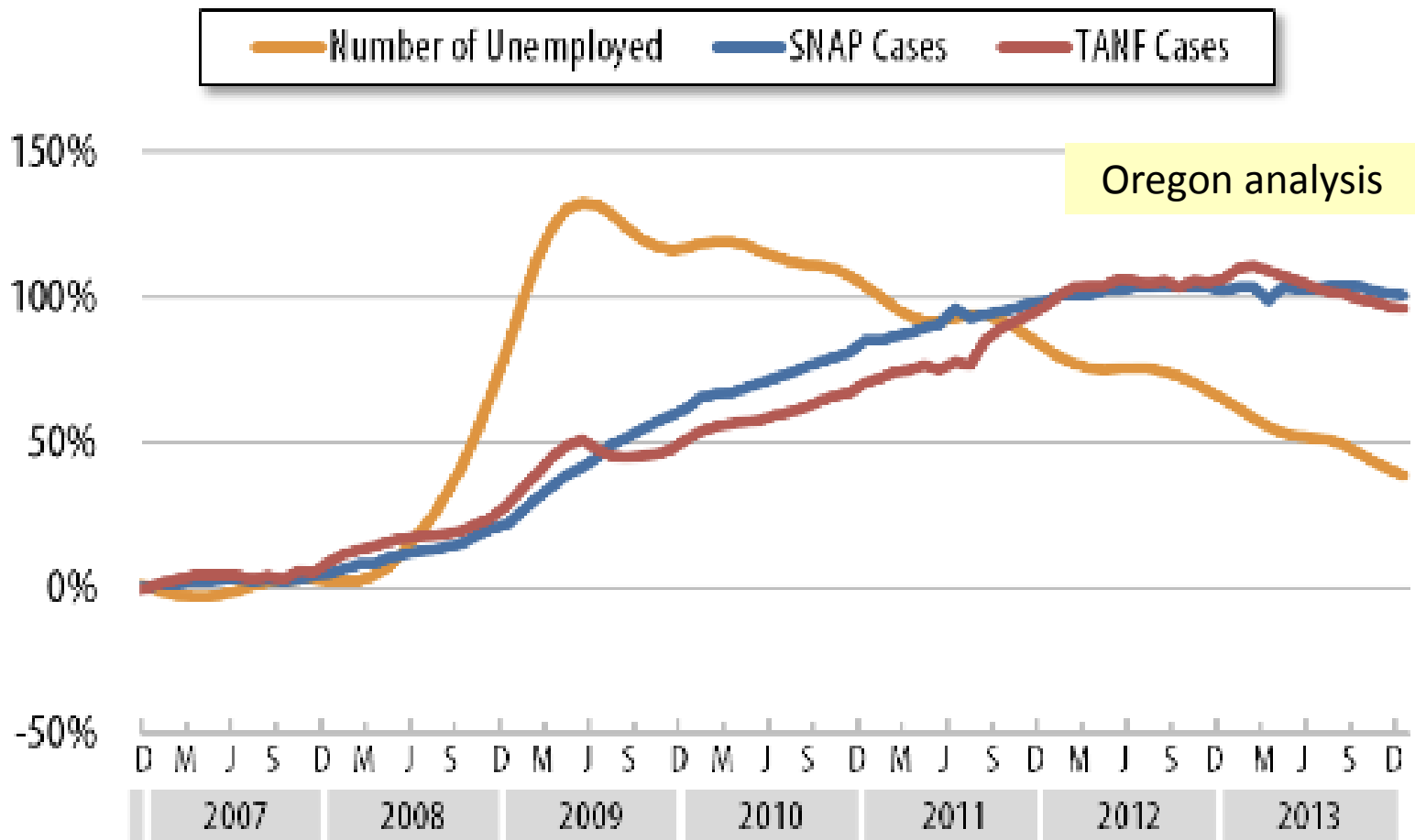
- Unlike most states, caseloads increased during the economic downturn
- Maximum benefit levels are above the US median but have eroded with inflation
- Eligibility ends at low levels of earnings

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.

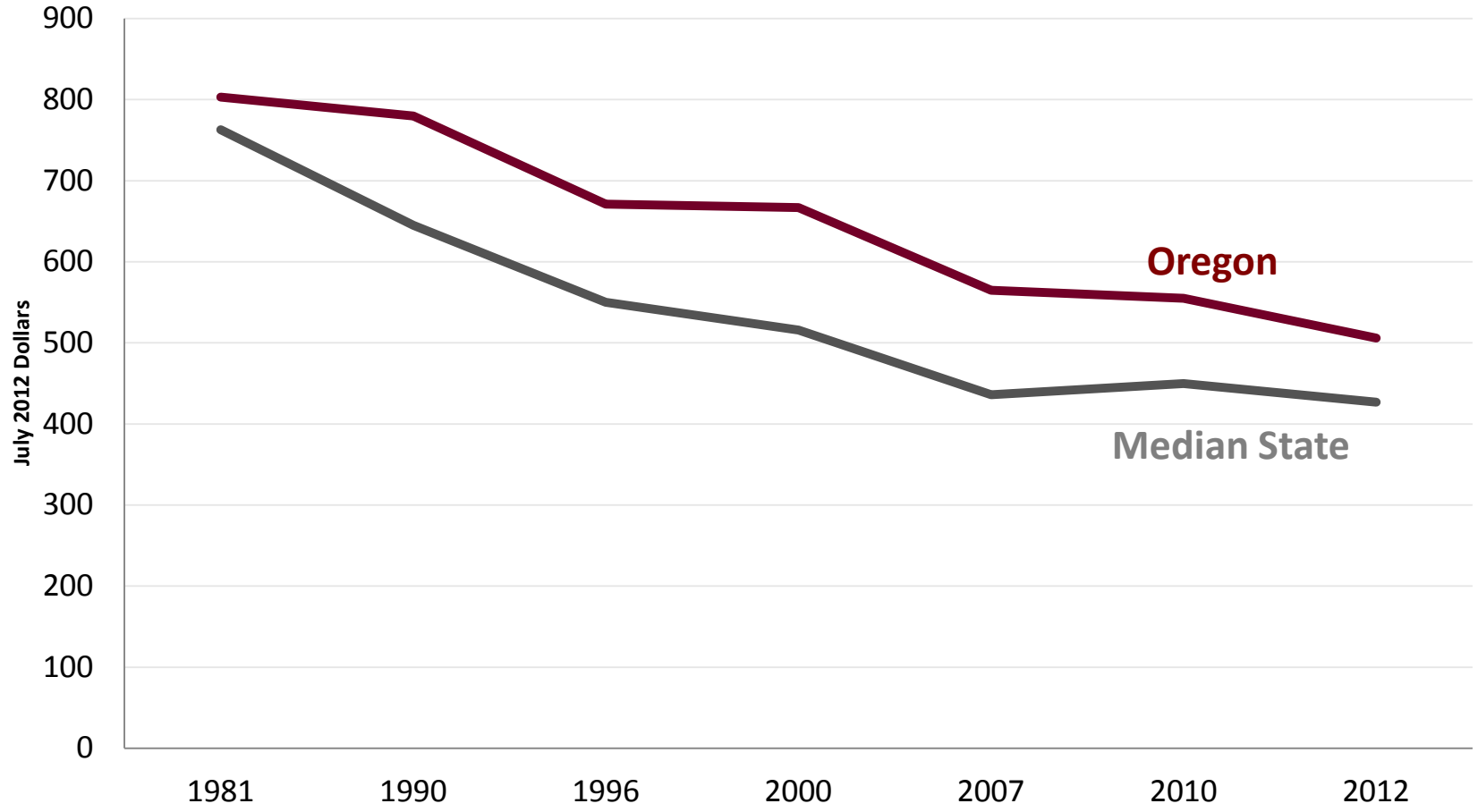
In Oregon, TANF caseloads grew at rates similar to the SNAP program



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

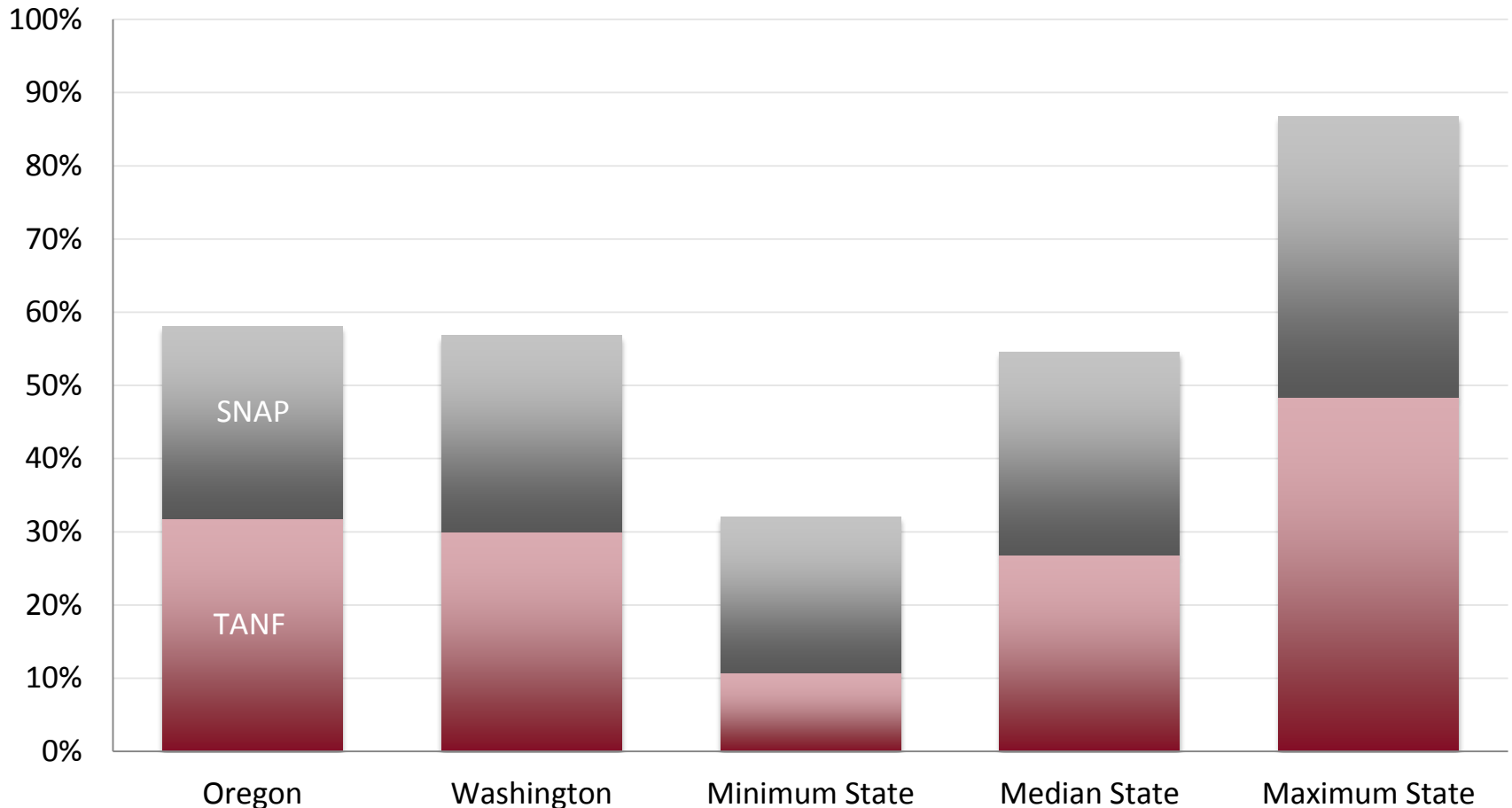
Maximum Monthly AFDC/TANF Benefit for a Single Parent Caring for Two Children, Constant July 2012 Dollars



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

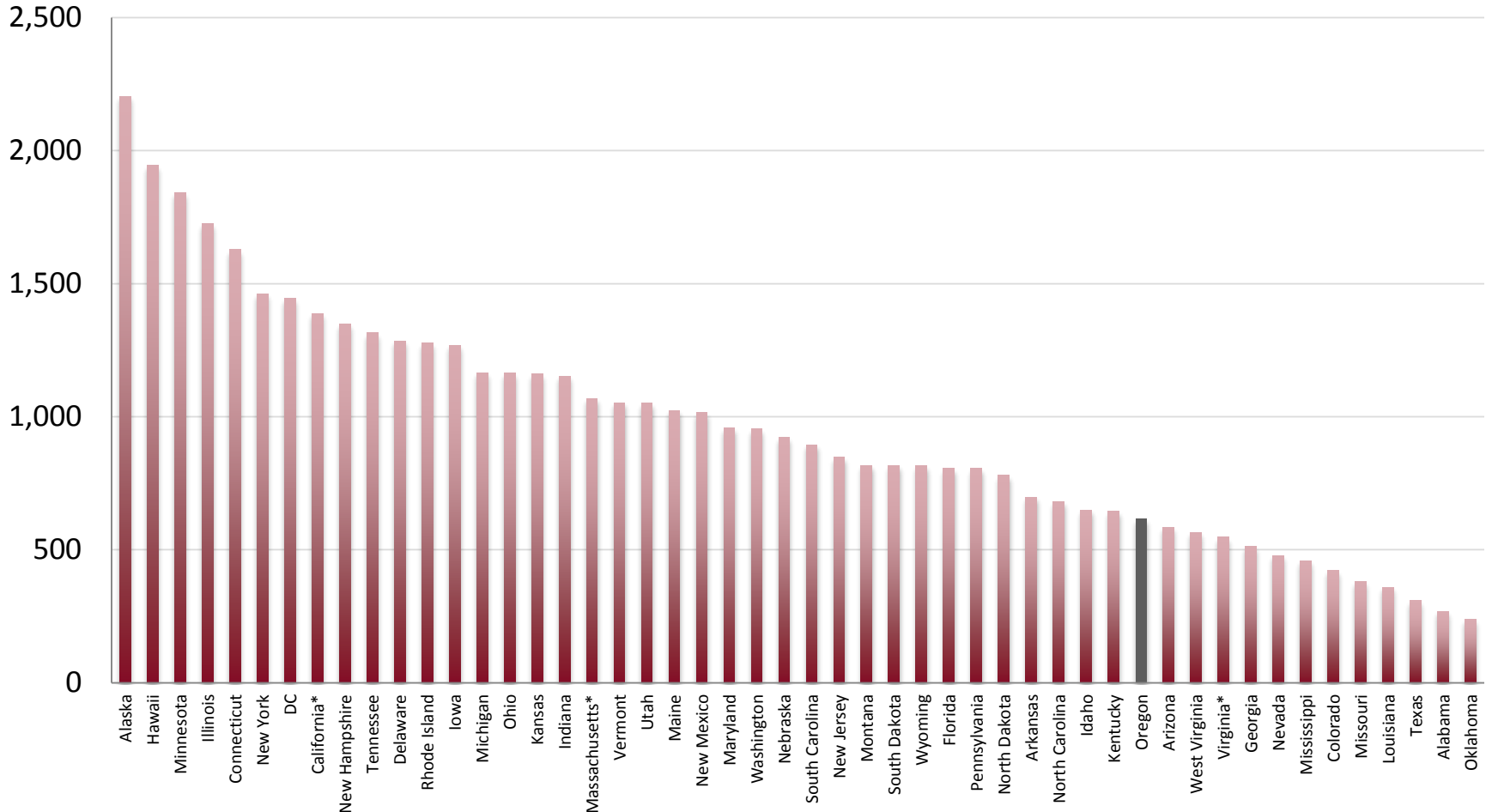
Combined TANF+SNAP benefits are close to the national median

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



Source: Urban Institute *Welfare Rules Databook*

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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