

April 20, 2015

HB 3535 with amendments

Chair Keny-Guyer and members of the committee:

OWRC supports the efforts of advocates and the department to make some changes to the TANF program so that it might better serve clients as the economy improves.

Historically we have supported TANF, in particular any efforts to train clients for meaningful employment. We strongly advocated for the inclusion of education as part of the solution for a portion of the clients in the program.

We were involved as advocates in the redesign during the interim before HB 2469 in the 2007 Oregon Legislature which culminated in the redesign. That redesign was never able to be fully implemented due to the state of the state and national economy.

The drastic cuts to the program during the recession forced the suspension of some services which continue under the current bill. While we support these suspension we look forward to robust research and discussion of how meaningful training and education can help clients in supporting their families.

It is our hope that the renewed efforts toward workforce training will include many TANF clients in the mix. Only meaningful training and/or education resulting in real wage jobs can help stabilize these families as they progress in their journey to independence.

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