



Oregon's Poverty Fighting Network

CAPO Members

May 5, 2015

ACCESS

Clackamas County Social Services

Community Action Organization

Community Action Program
of East Central Oregon

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Community Services Consortium

Klamath-Lake Community Action
Services

Lane County Human Services
Commission

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Council

Mid-Willamette Valley Community
Action Agency

Multnomah County Department of
County Human Services

NeighborImpact

Oregon Coast Community Action

Oregon Human Development Corp.

United Community Action Network

Yamhill Community Action Partnership

TO: Chair Gelser and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

FROM: Mike Fieldman, Community Action Partnership of Oregon

IN RE: Support for HB 2442 with -5 amendment

I am pleased to submit this testimony on behalf of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon in support of HB 2442 with the -5 amendments.

I serve as the Executive Director of the United Community Action Network or UCAN, the Community Action Agency that serves both Douglas and Josephine Counties with offices in both Roseburg and Grants Pass. I also have the unique role of being on both the State Housing Council that advises OHCS on housing issues and a member and past president of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO), the state association for Oregon's 19 Community Action Agencies serving all 36 Oregon counties. Our goal is to bring stability to individuals and families in crisis, and to provide opportunities for them, once stable, to pursue a prosperous future. We are locally governed, and our agencies are each slightly varied to meet the differing needs of our local communities.

CAPO partners closely with Oregon Housing and Community Services. They administer federal and state funds that our local agencies use to end families' homelessness and keep houses warm in winter when hardship strikes. It is CAPO's statutory role to advise OHCS on these programs and generally on issues of poverty in our communities, including low-income energy needs and homelessness.

HB 2442 was the result of an extensive review process of OHCS and its operations and mission. Given my three differing roles with OHCS I was an active participant in that process and want to give OHCS Director Van Vliet kudos for the time, effort and quality of that effort. It was inclusive, transparent, professional and thorough in its execution. It has led to a

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**Community Action Partnership
of Oregon**

www.caporegon.org

945 Columbia Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

phone: (503) 316-3951

fax: (503) 363-0113





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good draft document.

CAPO, along with the individual Community Action Agencies, was very engaged and interested in the reorganization process. OHCS delivers these services through the Community Action network, and does not provide any services directly. Having this input from community providers is critical if services are to be provided in a manner that is effective, efficient and coordinated. This feedback helps OHCS develop state plans, ORS rules, monitoring criteria and other administrative duties.

It is easy for processes to be put in place at a state administrative level that seems very logical and effective yet have the opposite affect when actually implemented on the ground. The feedback loop I described helps head off those missteps.

When you take a step back to look at how this legislation will change the department, you'll see a reset of the statutorily prescribed boards and bodies that provide advice on individual programs in favor of two advisory bodies that will work collaboratively to align systems within the agency and improve service delivery. In addition, the agency has committed to a more flexible method gathering specific feedback by creating sub-committees to inform the Housing Stability Council as needed.

CAPO is the entity that provides the local community input to OHCS as to the real needs and issues in every community in Oregon. This advisory role of CAPO to OHCS has been in place for years. Having CAPO in this advisory role has served OHCS, the State of Oregon and mostly the low-income people we all are striving to support, well. Because of this critically important and historically significant relationship it was important that this role remain during the reorganization process. In reviewing the legislation, as originally drafted, CAPO identified that this role was present, and with suggested amendments that OHCS has agreed to, it is maintained and enhanced. With this new structure and redefined partnership CAPO thinks that the framework is in place to build on past successes of addressing the condition of poverty in our communities.

For more information contact Ryan Fisher email: ryan@nwpublicaffairs.com cell: (503) 807-7525

