

To: House Committee on Rules, Oregon Legislature

From: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Subject: House Bill 3535 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Chair Hoyle

Vice Chair Smith Warner

Members of the Committee

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians. We are called to “love justice” and to act in solidarity with those on the margins. Justice requires us to establish social and economic systems that encourage, enable and empower all people to develop and use their capabilities to meet their needs and to contribute to the social welfare.

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program is an exemplar of such a system. It helps families meet their most basic needs, protects children and helps parents get back to work. It is, in a very real sense, the core poverty-fighting program in our state.

However, it has historically been underfunded and badly needs to be revitalized. The current economic recovery presents an opportunity for Oregon to re-invest in this vital work.

This bill will reduce the "benefits cliff" which families face when parents do become employed, simplifies eligibility requirements and expands family stability services and increases support services which ultimately prevent families from needing TANF.

It is a good bill for Families and a good bill for Oregon, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon strongly urges you to pass it.

Sincerely

Dr. Rex Hagans

Vice Chair

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon Public Policy Advocacy Committee