



Testimony of John Mullin, Legislative Advocate

Earned Income Tax Credit HB 4144 – House Revenue Committee 2-15-16

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Mister Chair, members of the committee, I am pleased to have this opportunity to submit testimony on HB 4144A.

The Oregon Law Center's (OLC) mission is "access to justice for Oregon's low income communities." For numerous sessions, OLC has supported increases in Oregon's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC.) However, while the advocacy work we have done with many others has led to increases in the state's EITC, it was distressing to learn that Oregon ranks last in EITC participation.

Fortunately, we have an opportunity to improve participation as provided for in HB 4144. While there are key decisions to be made about how to make progress, I fully support the following:

- Comprehensive reporting by the Department of Revenue (DOR) on participation rates, including geographic and demographic distribution;
- Enhancing current DOR tools for better consumer access and information;
- Linkage to other tax credits for low income Oregonians;
- Discussion about how to further promote the program and target outreach. I am in favor of an interim discussion, convened by the Department of Human Services (DHS), to include all appropriate state agencies as well as community based stakeholders concerned about low income individuals and families.

On the final point, I would note that the amended bill simply creates a Task Force led by DHS. I would be pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the discussion and recommendations to the Legislature on ways to provide greater awareness and targeted outreach with the goal of greatly improving our participation rate.

Thank you for your consideration.

