



**Testimony in support of HB2534**  
**Tate Williams, Graduate Candidate**  
**National Policy Consensus Center, Portland State University**

In 2016, NPCC published a report on Communities of Concentrated Poverty. Recognizing the importance of addressing communities of concentrated poverty not just individual poverty, NPCC and the Oregon Business Council Poverty Task Force began working with Rep. Jeff Reardon to identify ways to empower and strengthen these communities. I was asked to research this topic starting with conversations with some of Oregon’s leading experts on these vulnerable communities. I interviewed people from HUD, STEM Hubs, RACs, The Ford Family Foundation, Chief Education Office, Association of Oregon Counties, and the Federal Reserve). These conversations explored the challenges communities faced in addressing poverty on a community-wide scope, including accessing available state and federal funding.

In 2015 Oregon Department of Health Services listed its top “high poverty hot spots”, defined as a census tract or contiguous group of tracts with poverty rates of 20 percent or more for two consecutive measurements. A list of the top 25 hot spots of concentrated poverty is attached to my testimony. Working with HUD, we used the DHS rankings we added age, education, SNAP recipients and percentage of low income housing units in these communities. Looking at these communities through this multidimensional lens we see that communities are struggling to overcome multiple layers of social, economic and educational hardships. Our research showed consistent challenges that hinder our ability to address communities of concentrated poverty from reaching their full potential.

These communities face significant challenges but the answer may lay in the communities themselves. Each person interviewed promoted the community wisdom, determination, and self-sufficiency they witnessed as they worked with minimum resources. The innovative and creative ways communities were navigating the difficult terrain was inspiring. The interviews reframed the question to “what can WE learn and how do WE support, guide, and encourage the community work already happening?” These discussions emphasized the need to support community based and community led solutions.

I am supporting the creation of the Poverty to Opportunity Commission and Opportunity Fund so that we as a state can honor the diversity of our communities, while identifying and promoting solutions that create sustainable pathways to success.

I am happy to answer any questions.

# OREGON POVERTY HOT SPOTS

DHS DEVELOPED "POVERTY HOTSPOTS"

County	Area	ACS Poverty Rate	Housing Units	Percent recent occupied	Under 18 yrs of age %	With at least Bachelor's degree	English Proficiency	Per Capita SNAP Clients	Hotspot Index Rank
Multnomah	Centennial	31%	6,556	49%	27%	16%	75%	43%	1
Jackson	Medford West	32%	6,242	56%		11%	90%	46%	2
Malheur	Ontario East	53%	1,892	55%		3%	80%	60%	3
Marion	Airport	34%	1,692	59%	27%	11%	87%	48%	4
Klamath	Klamath Falls East	35%	6,205	55%	26%	15%	92%	51%	5
Marion	Grant Highland	33%	4,002	56%	27%	14%	87%	49%	6
Jefferson	Madras West	25%	1,521	53%		16%	80%	47%	7
Marion	Northgate	53%	1,845	71%	35%	13%	80%	48%	8
Jefferson	Warm Springs	30%	903	33%		9%	100%	49%	10
Multnomah	Rockwood-Centennial	30%	7,249	49%		10%	82%	36%	11
Multnomah	Northeast Halsey	32%	6,130	58%		16%	76%	39%	12
Columbia	St. Helens	26%	1,794	38%		17%	97%		13
Klamath	Altamont	27%	2,515	45%	23%	14%	97%	41%	16
Klamath	Klamath Falls West	40%	2,338	51%	19%	15%	100%	44%	17
Lane	Willamalane Park	39%	2,956	47%	22%	23%	97%	38%	18
Josephine	Grants Pass North-Central	30%	4,537	59%	26%	11%	100%	38%	19
Multnomah	Lents-Powellburst	28%	11,777	48%	26%	15%	75%	42%	20
Multnomah	Cully	26%	4,970	39%	26%	19%	84%	28%	24
Coos	Barview-Charleston	31%	1,405	29%	24%	8%	98%	35%	25