



**TESTIMONY ON HB 3398 – OREGON HUNGER TASK FORCE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING  
SUBMITTED BY PHILLIP KENNEDY-WONG  
MARCH 28, 2017**

Oregon Food Bank supports HB 3398, which adds back the Oregon Hunger Task Force to the Governor’s proposed 2017-19 budget with an appropriation of \$150,000 in state General Funds. HB 3398 allows the task force to continue providing an invaluable role in anti-hunger for our state.

Oregon has a hunger crisis. Despite 50 consecutive months of job growth, Oregon had the highest rate spike in hunger in the nation over the last three years. Oregon’s food insecurity rate rose to 16.1 percent as compared to the national average of 13.7 percent<sup>i</sup> from 2013 to 2015. The average number of Oregon households in that period unable to secure all of their nutritious needs weekly was over 250,000.<sup>ii</sup>

How does Oregon know if it has the right tools and the necessary resources to fight hunger effectively? Created by the Legislature 28 years ago, the Oregon Hunger Task Force has been the hunger policy clearinghouse of public and private efforts for the Governor and the Legislature.

Every sector of our society is needed to fight hunger from government to community organizations to private citizens. The task force brings together state legislators, public agencies, policy experts, practitioners from the field and community organizations to identify root causes of hunger and to evaluate the efficacy of our efforts. The task force regularly reviews federal and state programs, community efforts, statutory and administrative policies for their effectiveness; and then recommends an action plan that reflects Oregon’s priorities.

With hunger on the rise once again, federal food assistance programs continued decline, and lack of affordable housing ravaging our state, Oregon needs a coordinated and sophisticated approach to defeating hunger that takes into account the complexity of an economic recovery that has not translated into broader prosperity. The task force provides an ideal medium free from partisanship to tackle the vexing nature of hunger in greater detail than what a governor or legislative committee can afford to. The task force has conducted field visits to communities across Oregon, hosted conferences, invited academics to share their research, produced strategic plans, advised governors, legislators and agency directors, and birthed legislation that were successfully adopted.

Oregon needs the Hunger Task Force more than ever. Thank you for your consideration.

<sup>i</sup> [Food Insecurity in Oregon: Considering the Role of Housing](#), Oregon State University School of Public Policy and the Rural Studies Program, October 2016  
<sup>ii</sup> [Profile of Hunger, Poverty, and Federal Nutrition Programs](#): Oregon, Food Research & Action Center, 2016

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