

March 27, 2017

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee,

We would like to lend our support to HB 2534, which would establish a Poverty to Opportunity Commission and fund. This bill has become necessary given the complexity and the prevalence of areas of concentrated poverty in Oregon. In both urban and rural parts of our State we have found very intractable problems with populations that require integrated and holistic approaches and solutions which our traditional institutions are unable to deliver. This bill offers a new approach and we believe it is the only hope we have to responsibly address a problem that has persisted in our communities in an unacceptable way.

To address communities of concentrated poverty, local, state and federal agencies must collaborate with private and non-private organizations to leverage and braid funding streams, align grant making and reporting requirements, and invest in capacity for collaboration. The proposed Poverty to Opportunity Commission has the capacity to support a guiding backbone to work from a common agenda, create a multi-sector shared measurement, commit to mutually reinforcing activities, and continuous communication between communities and bureaucracy. The focus of this Commission is to connect Oregon's most vulnerable communities to coordinated resources, funding, and technical support.

The Association of Oregon Counties looks forward to serving on the Commission and assisting in the Commission's efforts. We believe the convening authority that Counties provide along with the ability to connect state and local resources from all sectors on the ground will enhance our collective ability to deliver integrated solutions. We urge your approval of HB 2534.

Sincerely,



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