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August 7, 2020

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Marsh and Reschke, and Members of the House Revenue Committee:

Representing people of faith across the state, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) urges you to protect some of the most vulnerable Oregonians by disconnecting from costly tax provisions of the federal CARES Act and instead dedicating funding in a carefully calibrated way, including to the housing, nutrition and educational needs of Oregon's unaccompanied houseless youth.

Nationally, there is bipartisan support for CARES Act disconnects. The following are states which have disconnected from tax provisions in the federal CARES Act:

- Georgia (Republican House, Senate and Governor)
- North Carolina (Republican House and Senate, Democratic Governor)
- Colorado (Democratic House, Senate and Governor)

Oregon already faced a youth houselessness crisis before the pandemic.

Our state is tied for the *highest rate of houseless youth* and 1 in 6 of these youth are unaccompanied youth navigating houselessness without being in the presence of a parent or guardian.



To make matters worse, experts predict that youth houselessness will only rise as a result of the pandemic and its economic fallout. If the Legislatures fails to extend the eviction moratorium, Oregon will likely witness trends similar to those seen in past downturns such as 2008 Recession, when the number of houseless students rose 50% in the U.S. and 32% in Oregon. A similar increase today would see at 1,200 to 1,800 additional youth become houseless.

Oregon's UHY resemble our foster youth but have far less services devoted to their needs. UHY are disproportionately survivors of physical and sexual abuse (up to 50% nationally), LGBTQIA+ youth (up to 40%), and former foster care youth (33%). Many also experience systemic racism, and Black youth are 3 times more likely than whites to experience youth houselessness in the U.S. Nationally, 36% of UHY are Black and 52% are youth of color.¹

We urge the Legislature to disconnect from costly tax provisions of the CARES Act, and to carefully craft a budget that allocates this funding in a way that matches the needs of Oregonians and the values of our state.

Sincerely,
Britt Conroy
Public Policy Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/962207/share-unaccompanied-homeless-youth-us-race/>