

March 6, 2019

To: House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services  
From: Alicia Temple, Oregon Law Center  
Date: March 6, 2019  
RE: HB 2650, 211info Funding

Chair Evans and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today on behalf of the Oregon Law Center in support of HB 2650, to fund 211info to serve Oregonians across the state. This bill would allow a 24/7 contact center and provide 211info with the ability to accelerate its impact with regional Community Engagement Coordinators.

OLC is a non-profit organization that provides free legal help to people struggling to make ends meet. Our mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. We advocate for our clients and for the services and programs that help them to overcome poverty. 211info is an important part of connecting clients with the resources available in communities around the state.

Families and individuals need help at all times of day and 211info is a vital resource to connect them to services. HB 2650 would provide funding for specialists via phone, text and email at all hours, every day of the year. This bill meets the needs of working families who can't access information during traditional business hours and strengthens communities by providing details on a wide range of resources.

Currently, more than a third of 211info's contacts are turned away because they dial 211 outside its business hours of 8am-6pm weekdays. This is a clear sign that we need a system that can be responsive to the real needs of people. Expanded service hours will better serve the state contractors who need 24/7 service for their constituents, enable closer alignment with 911, mental health and domestic violence supports, and provide a framework for coordinated entry programs and other innovations.

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center, and low-income families who rely on the services they get connected to through 211info, please support HB 2650.