



Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97218 | p 503.288.8177 | f 503.288.1260 | nayapdx.org

April 3, 2019

To: Chair Sanchez, Vice Chair Noble, Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing

RE: House Bill 3183 – Support

Chair Sanchez, Vice Chair Noble, and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is William Miller and I serve as the Health Equity Program Coordinator at the Native American Youth and Family Center located in Portland, Oregon. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today and Chair Sanchez for leading this committee in the absence of Representative Keny-Guyer; we wish her the best in her healing journey. NAYA's wraparound programs directly serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 Native Americans living in Portland's growing Native American community a year.

However, of those we serve, there are too many families experiencing crisis and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is one of the safety nets which allow our families stability in the midst of deep poverty. The TANF program assists families who have and continue to experience hardships in their lives and it seeks to uplift and support them during such times in order to get them back on their feet. There are several areas in which current recipients of TANF are in need. A large barrier is the ability to access mental health and addiction services for TANF families. Across the state, access to behavioral health services is a barrier for families in poverty. A lack of providers or availability keeps families from getting the care they need, when they need it. Additionally, supporting families once they transition off of TANF is another barrier in the success of these families; when a family leaves the program, a single unexpected expense can derail their path. A post-TANF flexible fund that can help with costs that come up, like car repairs, can give families the ability to continue to work and overcome the benefits cliff.



Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97218 | p 503.288.8177 | f 503.288.1260 | nayapdx.org

For example, one of our community members experienced extreme financial hardship once they successfully left the TANF program. Their SNAP, TANF, and daycare funding were no longer available to them once they transitioned on their own. Fortunately, they had the support of community based organizations to assist and provide opportunities for them to get back on their feet through this transition. If they didn't have these support systems, they would have had to again, rely on the assistance of the TANF program. With the proposed -1 amendment, our families throughout Oregon will be able to transition with continued stability and hope.

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center we urge the passage of HB 3183 with the included -1 amendment.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive.

William Miller
Health Equity Program Coordinator
Native American Youth and Family Center
WilliamM@nayapdx.org
O: (503) 288-8177 ext 306
C: (971) 288-7783