

April 3, 2019

RE: Support for HB 3183 – TANF Update

Chair Sanchez and Representatives,

Children First for Oregon represents the interests of Oregon's almost 875,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive. Strengthening TANF services is on the 2019 Children's Agenda with 25 partners registering their support.

HB 3183 with the -1 amendment is the result of more than a year of work courtesy of two work groups. During the 2018 legislative session, Speaker Kotek began a 2018 workgroup learning about the different populations that are eligible for Temporary Aid for Needy Families TANF. Carrying on the work during the 2019 session, Representatives Noble and Sanchez conducted a subsequent workgroup.

One of the goals of HB 3183 -1 is to finally remove the TANF statute that was created in the 2007 session and has been suspended each biennium since then. Another goal is to set the stage for several proposals as a result of the work group. We will need to amend the -1 to fix some errors so TANF can be properly updated. We hope this amendment will be ready so families can receive the stability they so desperately need.

Note, TANF is for families at rock bottom. To qualify for TANF, a household must have children and be very poor. For a family of three to be eligible they must have income at or below 37% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or \$616 income per month. The monthly benefit level for a family of three receiving TANF was \$506. This level of benefit has hardly changed in the last 20 years since the program was founded. In addition to the grant, TANF offers job training and several other services we hope to expand with this legislation.

Thank you for your interest in TANF. As co-chair of the TANF Alliance, this program is critical for Oregon children who otherwise would not have a chance at stability at home. I urge your support of the final bill.

James Barta
Strategic Director

Together we can build an Oregon where all children thrive.