



NeighborImpact

Supporting People. Strengthening Communities.

March 11, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to you today regarding HB 2164, the Cover All People Act.

NeighborImpact is the community action agency serving Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. We serve approximately 55,000 mostly low-income Central Oregonians each year with one of our 12 major services, including food, housing, energy assistance, Head Start and many more.

Biennially, we commission a statistically valid survey of our entire community, using a professional national survey company. One of the questions we ask is "Which of these emergency situations are currently a problem in Central Oregon?" One of the sub-bullets asked about is "Access to healthcare." Our 2019 data was instructive as it relates to the need for HB2164.

- 49 percent of households making less than \$25,000 per year said access to healthcare is an issue, compared to 32% percent out of households making more than \$100,000 annually

A separate bullet asked for opinions about access to mental health care services.

- 42 percent of households making less than \$25,000 per year said access to healthcare is an issue, compared to 27% percent out of households making more than \$100,000 annually

HB2164 would respond to this identified gap by providing provide health care coverage and access to medically underserved people including undocumented adults, DACA recipients, legal permanent residents and young adults who age out of Cover All Kids. Only Oregonians under 138% (190% for pregnant women) of the poverty level would be eligible.

Strengthening access to reliable and consistent primary care will reduce medical costs over time. It will also create opportunity for low-income populations to maintain their health,

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increasing ability to participate in the workforce, reducing debt, boosting economic activity by transferring disposable income from healthcare to retail expenses and improving quality of life overall.

As you know, being uninsured disproportionately affects rural Oregonians, communities of color, and low-wage working families. Healthcare coverage is a tool to help ensure better care outcomes among communities who are medically underserved. I

HB 2164 , the Cover All People Act, would change the economic landscape for an entire group of people whom we serve currently with our services and would be life changing for the newly covered segment of the population and would like provide a desirable boost to local economies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Director, NeighborImpact