



May 4, 2021

To the Senate Committee on Health Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Dear Senator Sara Gelser, Senator Dick Anderson, Senator Kate Lieber, Senator Art Robinson, and Senator Kathleen Taylor:

We write on behalf of William Temple House in support of House Bill 3026, which would waive identification fees for unhoused folks in Oregon.

William Temple House is a Portland-based nonprofit organization that offers low-cost counseling and free healthy groceries to our community. Around 25% of the people who access our food pantry currently experience homelessness and housing insecurity, a significant increase from our pre-pandemic data.

From housing and job applications to health care and SNAP benefits, identification is a key requirement for so many essential resources people need to stay stable and healthy. Our unhoused clients often describe the significant challenges they face in obtaining and preserving identification cards. We would like to share some of our clients' stories with you.

One of our houseless clients who frequently visits our food pantry recently received a Section 8 housing voucher after years of being on the waitlist. But because her ID card had been stolen and she could not afford the ID replacement fee, she was unable to complete the Section 8 application process. With no way to apply for housing without identification, her Section 8 voucher expired before it could be used, and she remains unhoused today.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have heard from numerous unhoused folks who could not access their stimulus payments without ID cards. Because banks do not cash checks or open accounts for folks without ID cards, many of our clients had no outlet to receive the financial relief that stimulus payments were intended to provide. While stimulus payments had the potential to provide our unhoused community members with much-needed financial support during this difficult time, those funds were inaccessible to those among the hardest hit by the pandemic solely due to lack of identification needed to access them.

We at William Temple House urge you to support HB 3026 because our clients report that fees for obtaining and replacing identification cards are a leading barrier to accessing opportunities and maintaining financial stability. The passage of this bill would significantly improve the lives of our clients and bring us one step closer to fully supporting the needs of our unhoused neighbors in Oregon.

Thank you for supporting our communities.

Sincerely,



Carrie Hoops, Executive Director

*William Temple House Advocacy Committee:*

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