



House Committee on Human Services
Testimony in Support of HB 4088 - SNAP Restaurant Meals Program
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AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50+ to choose how they live as they age. With over 500,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.

AARP supports HB 4088 with the -2 Amendments. The Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's largest domestic nutrition assistance program for individuals and families who meet certain income and asset thresholds. In 2020, nearly 9.5 million Americans ages 50 and older (about 8%) were food-insecure. In Oregon about 85,000 Oregonians 50+ (5.5%) were food-insecure. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant increases in food insecurity for older adults, especially among Black, Hispanic and Latino older adults.

Older adults face ongoing challenges and life disruptions that may compromise their ability to afford food. For example, the death of a spouse or loved one can lead to a living situation that is unstable and socially isolated. Older adults who lose employment face longer durations of unemployment than younger workers. Food-insecurity can lead to older adults engaging in economic trade-offs, sacrificing their food budget to pay for other necessities, such as rent or other housing costs, transportation, or medical bills. The ripple effect is profound, and older adults with food insecurity are more likely to have life changing health conditions. Access to SNAP has been linked to better health outcomes, reduced hospital and nursing home admissions.

HB 4088 requires the Oregon Department of Human Services to convene a work group to advise the Department on a plan to implement a SNAP Restaurant Meals Program serving older Oregonians, people who have disabilities and people dealing with homelessness. These vulnerable Oregonians may have limited or no capacity to buy, prepare and store food.

We want to thank Rep. Campos and her staff for working with us, especially under session time constraints to secure two amendments we requested (and are reflected in the -2) The first is to expand the make-up of the workgroup in Section 1(2) to include those who have personal experience with SNAP as well as geographic, racial or ethnic diversity. The second is to provide some guidance to the department report in Section 1(4) to add evaluation language including examining issues of access, efficacy and cost.

For all these reasons, AARP Oregon respectfully urges this Committee to pass HB 4088 with the -2 and additional amendments discussed at today's hearing.