



The Office of
Representative WLnsvy E. Campos

Oregon House District 28

TESTIMONY

REGARDING HB 4088: RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM WORKGROUP

Chair Williams, Vice Chairs Ruiz and Scharf, and members of committee:

For the record, my name is WLnsvy Campos, my pronouns are she/her, and I am the State Representative for District 28, which covers Beaverton and Aloha and sits on the traditional lands of the Atfalati, Cowlitz, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and Kalapuya peoples.

I'm here today to testify in support of HB 4088, which would require the Oregon Department of Human Services to convene a workgroup to develop a plan for the implementation of the Restaurant Meals Program in Oregon.

To briefly summarize, the Restaurant Meals Program is a federal program that allows elderly, disabled and houseless recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and their spouse to use their Electronic Benefit Transaction card or EBT card to purchase prepared meals from participating restaurants.

People experiencing houselessness, seniors, and people with disabilities, for varying reasons, are all populations that struggle with access to hot food even if they're eligible for SNAP benefits. While federal law created in the 1970's eliminated the ability for people on SNAP to buy the hot food at grocery store delis, what we can do is enroll Oregon in the federal Restaurant Meal Program, which allows restaurants to enter into contracts that make them eligible to accept SNAP dollars for the food their restaurant provides. This bill directs ODHS to convene a workgroup to prepare for the successful, accessible, equitable implementation of the Restaurant Meals Program in Oregon in 2023 for the communities identified above.

Six states – Arizona, California, Maryland, Michigan, Rhode Island and Virginia – have enrolled in the Restaurant Meals Program, and Illinois and New York have passed laws directing their social service agencies to apply for the program.

While I wish that we could enroll in the Restaurant Meals Program starting now, we've seen across that nation that the states that took the time to plan for implementation saw robust participation from restaurants and successfully created equitable access to hot food while states that rushed into implementation have seen a lack of restaurant participation, accessibility, and overall success of the program. That's why I feel that 2022 is the right time for this workgroup and I hope to have your support not only today but in 2023 when we can truly begin to make use of this program to help vulnerable Oregonians.

To ensure that this workgroup's plan truly sets us up for success for full implementation, we have requested an amendment that will be posted soon, which makes some small but important

changes. The amendment clarifies that impacted people should participate in the workgroup, not just those with professional experience working with those populations, and specifies that the report compiled by the workgroup and ODHS will be submitted to the committee on Human Services. The amendment also sets goals of accessibility, effectiveness, and nutrition standards for the workgroup's report. Access to hot meals is beneficial to both your physical and mental health and is something all people deserve.

Colleagues, I urge you to support HB 4088 and to pass this bill out of committee. Thank you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wlensvey E. Campos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Wlensvey E. Campos