



Oregon moms and caregivers fighting for gender, economic, and racial justice.

February 17, 2022

House Rules Committee
RE: Support for HB 4157

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson, Fahey, and
Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 4157. Family Forward Oregon is committed to advancing policies that support mothers and caregivers and help them to achieve economic stability, for themselves and for the families who rely on them. Our organization supports HB 4157, which would provide financial support to low income Oregonians to help support their cost of living and economically recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, low-wage workers have played an essential role in allowing Oregon's economy to function and stay afloat. They have shown up to do jobs like ringing up groceries, cleaning hospital rooms, driving buses and ambulances, and treating critically ill patients. But the cost of living for these workers remains high. While our broader economy has made strong gains, inflation and the cost of living have increased. Child care continues to be unaffordable and inaccessible, rent continues to rise, and healthcare costs have also remained high throughout this pandemic. Working families need support to keep pace and pay for essential needs, like child care, housing, food, and utilities.

Furthermore, the combination of being a woman, a single mother, and a person of color results in the highest levels of income inadequacy¹. More than half (58%) of single mothers in Oregon lack adequate income. These rates are particularly high for single mothers of color: 92% of Black and 65% of Latina single mothers lack adequate income— compared to 55% of White single mothers. Single mothers of color are particularly at risk of lacking adequate resources when children are young with 83% experiencing income inadequacy.

¹<https://www.oregon.gov/workforceboard/data-and-reports/Documents/Overlooked-Undercounted-2021.pdf>

HB 4157 will provide eligible individuals a one time payment of \$600 by check or direct deposit. Individuals are eligible for payments if they are Oregon residents who have claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit on their 2020 income tax returns by April 1, 2022. Existing data from the Department of Revenue will be used to ensure that payments are distributed quickly and efficiently, with eligible Oregonians receiving their cost of living support as early as June this year.

Low income workers in our state, especially women and mothers of color have been critical to Oregon's critical infrastructure, all while disproportionately bearing the weight of this COVID-19 crisis. The Legislature must respond by providing one-time payments to over 260,000 low-wage earners to support working individuals and families.

We urge your "YES" vote on HB 4157.

Sincerely,

Lisa Kwon
Policy Manager
Family Forward Oregon

