



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Human Services

Office of Aging and People with Disabilities

Office of the Director
500 Summer St. NE, E-10
Salem, OR 97301

Date: March 6, 2025



TO: The Honorable Annessa Hartman, Chair
House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

FROM: Dr. Nakeshia Knight-Coyle, Director
Office of Aging and People with Disabilities
Oregon Department of Human Services

SUBJECT: House Bill 3497

Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and members of the committee, I am Dr. Nakeshia Knight-Coyle, Director of the Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) within the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS).

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on House Bill 3497, which would direct state agencies to consider the effects of their policies and actions on older adults in Oregon. It also directs the creation of the Shared Future Oregon Task Force, which would develop a long term, multisector state plan for aging. The department is neutral on HB 3497.

The multisector plan for aging (MPA) would provide a roadmap to prepare for Oregon's future. Starting in 2030, adults age 65 and older will make up more than 20 percent of the population, and by 2034, older adults will outnumber children under the age of 18 for the first time. More older adults are staying in the workforce longer than previous generations, and when they leave the workforce, many older adults do not have the savings or financial resources as previous generations. This means they are more likely to need assistance and supports during their lifetime.

Older adults are contributing to their communities and to the state's economy. Their experiences and contributions help make Oregon a richer and more vibrant place to live as we plan for the future of aging in the state. At the same time, Oregon has work to do in preparing for these demographic shifts, and the development of an MPA would create a plan, including objectives and strategies to prepare the state to be a vibrant place to live, not just for older adults, but for people of all ages.

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In APD, our work and our future planning is an essential piece to these efforts. We support older adults and people with disabilities who need assistance so they can live in their own homes and communities and in the setting of their choice. APD, with its Area Agencies on Aging partners, provides services to tens of thousands of older adults through the Older Americans Act and Oregon Project Independence. APD provides regulatory oversight of licensed settings for long-term services and supports, and we investigate allegations of abuse through our Adult Protective Services. In our future planning work, we are prioritizing safety, workforce, and equity, all while grounding this work in the foundational values of independence, choice, and dignity for older adults and people with disabilities.

While APD and its partners provide an array of services and supports, HB 3497 proposes a wider scope of planning for the future of aging in Oregon. Those serving on the Task Force would represent many state agencies, community and advocacy organizations, and members from the Senate and House of Representatives. The work in creating a MPA in Oregon would not only encompass human and social services, but also housing, transportation, employment, education, and several other areas affecting older adults, their families, and their communities.

HB 3497, in describing the scope of the MPA, includes planning for healthy aging, supports for unpaid caregivers, and issues facing the workforce – both for older adults who are in the workforce, as well as the workforce providing health care and direct care supports for older adults. These are priorities for APD. The Task Force and future planning for the MPA would provide an opportunity to work together with partners in other sectors in these areas.

In creating the Task Force and beginning the work on the MPA, Oregon would be joining several other states that are either in the process of planning and designing or already implementing their own MPA. Both California and Massachusetts are among those that have started implementation.

While the department is neutral on HB 3497, APD can be a resource for technical assistance and guidance both for the work on HB 3497, and for the Task Force and its scope and schedule of work described in this bill. Please note that APD anticipates a fiscal impact for HB 3497. APD will need to devote additional staff time to provide research and support for the Task Force's members and staff.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 3497, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nakeshia Knight-Coyle
Director, Office of Aging and People with Disabilities

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