Submitter: Richard Zeller

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Ij have been an Oregonian all of my nearly 80 years. In that time, I have seen nothing compared to our need now to pull together as a State to address the crisis that has been and is being created in our larger economy, especially with respect to our poor and homeless population. I coordinate volunteers for a feeding program that provides a hot breakfast each week to about 275 hungry Eugene neighbors, the vast majority of whom sleep on the street or in camps without food resources. We also provide about 700 high protein sandwiches and hundreds of pounds of fruit and snacks each week to these folks. We distribute this food in conjunction with other churches and organizations. A part of these efforts includes trying to connect people to resources to help them get into better housing and a more stable living condition. The need for emergency food services has more than doubled since before COVID. We simply cannot raise the private resources to address these need. I strongly urge you to create as much capacity in our state to provide support relief and self-sufficiency for this population's needs. I am proud to live in a state where we are doing our very best to create a better economy that will not depend on expanding charity indefinitely. I urge members of the Committee and the Legislature to vote their conscience on this bill and to do everything possible to provide for a better Oregon for all our residents.