

Submitter: Jill Sipes
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006
4/16/2025

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the committee.

My name is Jill Sipes and I am an employee of DHS Aging and People with Disabilities program, reaching a 20-year milestone serving Oregonians essential services. I am a resident of Marion County for 8 years, but my roots and my heart largely remain in my hometown of Klamath Falls, I carry with me the perspective of rural and metro communities. Social service programs support critical needs and provide a safety net for our most vulnerable. I am testifying today to ask you to be BRAVE and prioritize funding for essential services for Oregonians.

When you review Department budgets, I hope the numbers and dollar signs are replaced by faces. Faces of the grocery clerk working 40 hours a week as a single income household struggling to keep up with rising rental and living expenses, the face of the coffee barista whose chronic illnesses are treated using Medicaid medical insurance, the face of the server who is topping off your coffee with a smile despite underlying exhaustion after already completing a full 10 hour shift elsewhere.

I am here today to ask you to invest. I ask you to see my face. I am a return on budget investments from 2005 which provided robust jobs supports through the temporary assistance to needy families. I have seen firsthand the impact of social service programs as I found my way into a lobby to apply for what was commonly referred to as "welfare". Don't we all value identifying returns on investment? Unfortunately, that program is not as robust today. I could never have imagined 8 promotions later while accomplishing a higher education that I would be afforded the opportunities that started with an open door and an incredible case manager who supported me in identifying my potential. Without the critical social service programs my and my girls future would certainly have been altered. Again, my ask is that you be BRAVE and find a way to prioritize the state budget for essential services despite uncertainties.

Thank you,
Jill Sipes