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RE: House Bill 3183

Chair Sanchez and members of the committee:

My name is Carla Piluso and I proudly represent House District 50, the great city of Gresham. I am writing in support of House Bill 3183 with the -1 amendments, which comes out of months of study and discussion by legislators and other stakeholders as part of the TANF Workgroup.

TANF is an essential program for low-income families throughout Oregon. It provides cash assistance and case management to families who face overwhelming challenges, helping them stay afloat and giving their children a chance at a better life.

TANF is intended to be a *temporary* support for families in need. It is limited in its scope, and the programs we provide TANF families are meant to support their progress towards self-sufficiency. But there are families on TANF who struggle to move off the program, and others who cycle in and out of eligibility over the course of their lives. The barriers these families face were the topic of Speaker Kotek's TANF workgroup, which spent the interim diving into the data to learn about why some TANF families stay on the program longer, and what we should be doing to help them.

For me, the overwhelming conclusion of all that data was this: TANF families need far more than what we are giving them. These families struggle with poverty, but they also struggle with the array of secondary challenges that poverty brings. Parents in poverty often don't have the bandwidth to complete the very activities that could increase their chances of success, like education or certifications that lead to better-paid jobs. Families who cannot find stable, affordable housing, or who struggle with mental health and addiction, have a harder time making progress towards self-sufficiency. And that progress can be completely derailed by unexpected expenses, like missing work due to illness, or paying to fix a broken-down car.

The -1 amendment to HB 3183 is a continuation of the work we did over the interim. The language before you is a result of close collaboration with DHS and other stakeholders, and includes policies that could mitigate some of the most intractable problems TANF families face. I thank Representatives Sanchez and Noble for taking the lead throughout this process, and I look forward to continuing these conversations through the budget process this session.

Sincerely,

Carla C. Piluso  
Oregon State Representative, House District 50