

May 7, 2019

To: Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Heard and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Sara Kofman, Alzheimer's Association Oregon and SW Washington Chapter

Subject: **Support for HB 2908A**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2908A. The Alzheimer's Association recognizes the profound benefit of Oregon Project Independence (OPI) for people living with Alzheimer's in Oregon. HB 2908A would require the Department of Human Services, in collaboration with area agencies, to study the statewide expansion of Oregon Project Independence. We appreciate that HB 2908A requires thoughtful consideration of projected case numbers, timelines for expansion and evaluation on program needs.

Alzheimer's is more than a disease about memory loss. Alzheimer's disease is fatal and is the sixth leading cause of death in our state. Nearly one in every three seniors who dies each year has Alzheimer's or another dementia. Today, an estimated 67,000 Oregonians are living with Alzheimer's disease. In less than 6 years – barring the development of medical breakthroughs to prevent, stop or slow Alzheimer's disease – this number is projected to grow by an astonishing 25%.

For more than 40 years, OPI services have been a lifeline for thousands of seniors in Oregon, including those living with Alzheimer's disease. The efficient and cost-effective supports and services of OPI allow individuals to stay in their home longer, supporting dignity and independence. Like many other organizations advocating on behalf of issues affecting seniors, the Alzheimer's Association has long been concerned about OPI's limited funds and waitlists. HB 2908A will take a much needed look at what is truly needed to fully fund this innovative, cost-effective and crucial program.

For these reasons, the Alzheimer's Association supports HB 2908A. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. Please contact Sara Kofman at skofman@alz.org with any questions.