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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 2, 2021

Chair Gelser
Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health, and Recovery
Oregon State Senate

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Today, I write to you in support SB 717.

As we are all aware, these are trying times for Oregonians. We are in the midst of a global pandemic and recovering from unprecedented wildfires. Now, more than ever, our neighbors are struggling. Struggling to find work, struggling to ensure that they keep a roof over their head, and struggling to make sure their family has enough to eat. And we, as their Representatives, need to find every way we can to help.

More than half of a million Oregonians receive support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This federally funded program provides a life preserver for many working Oregon families that without SNAP would have to make the tough decision between paying other essential expenses like the energy bill and buying groceries. It is important to note that SNAP does not cover other essential items such as cleaning supplies and basic hygiene products. Senate Bill 717 proposes a modest \$10 increase to SNAP per recipient specifically for purchasing personal hygiene products.

SNAP does not just save families from making impossible decisions. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP benefits are among the most effective forms of economic stimulus because they quickly inject money into the economy, and a SNAP benefit increase benefit can be implemented virtually immediately. If you don't believe the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, how about the Economic Research Service for the United States Department of Agriculture. Their July 18 2019 report stated that for every \$1 spent on SNAP benefits the GDP increases by \$1.50. This has a real and measurable economic benefit that is felt in the communities of the 3,000 retailers that participate in the SNAP program, in Urban Oregon and Rural Oregon. I strongly support SB 717 and encourage you all to pass it out of committee. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony and would be happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Rep. Paul Evans
House District 20