



Date: February 2, 2022
To: House Committee on Human Services
From: Ames Kessler, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Re: Support for HB 4117

Chair Williams, Vice Chairs Ruiz and Sharf, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4117. My name is Ames Kessler and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon (PHFO). PHFO is a statewide anti-poverty advocacy organization with a small staff of under 15 members. We understand that leadership comes from those with lived experience and that hunger and poverty do not exist on their own, but rather a result of overlapping systems of oppression that create layers of privilege and inequity. Our values and work are centered in creating systemic changes to end hunger.

We are writing in support of House Bill 4117 because we know that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is one of the most effective programs to help individuals and families transition from poverty to self-sufficiency. This bill would enable culturally specific and responsive community-based organizations, tribal governments, and rural communities to better assist their clients in accessing critical tax support and navigation resources.

In 2018, the EITC lifted about 5.6 million people out of poverty, including about 3 million children. The number of poor children would have been more than one-quarter higher without the EITC. The credit reduced the severity of poverty for another 16.5 million people, including 6.1 million children. In combination with the Child Tax Credit, the EITC lifts even more families with children out of poverty.¹

Now with the impact of Covid-19 on family job security and income, the need is even greater to overcome these barriers. It's imperative that Oregon execute a strategy to improve tax filing for both EITC access and other tax credits that are available to low-income families.

Every Oregon family eligible for these credits deserves access to free tax preparation and navigation resources so they can access these credits. [PHFO urges your support for HB 4117.](#)

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/the-earned-income-tax-credit>

Sincerely,
Ames Kessler
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon