

Submitter: Stacey Rutland
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Human Services
Measure: HB4079

I am writing to urge the Human Services Committee to vote YES, in favor of HB 4079.

It is time that our most wealthy share some of the profits they have made off of an economic system that benefits them and gives to those who have been most marginalized and negatively impacted by our current economic system. During the pandemic, we have seen the importance of direct cash on our citizens. The stimulus checks helped people weather the loss of income from the pandemic, the Child Tax Credit, monthly checks to families, brought millions of children out of poverty and significantly decreased child hunger.

Poverty exists because people do not have enough income to cover their basic needs. The solution to poverty is to give people money and increase their income so that they afford to thrive and take the risks necessary for improving their financial situations (take a day off from their job to interview for a better paying one, etc).

The targets of this bill, transitioning foster youth and single moms, are some of our community members hurt most by our current economic systems. Foster youth are most vulnerable to addiction, homelessness and suicide during the first years exiting the system. This is often due to a lack of resources and support that children with families get: more and more children are living with their parents when times are bad (pandemic and otherwise). Foster youth do not have this critical resource as an option. \$750 / month is not enough to live on, but it is enough to create a solid base that foster youth can build on - to go to community college, to afford gas to drive to a better job, to move out of a shelter and into a shared apartment. Single moms are often faced with the difficult decision of staying home to care for their children or incurring significant childcare costs to work. Full time \$10/hr jobs net \$1400 / month. Average childcare costs for a 4-year-old in Oregon are \$10,061, or \$838 each month. How can we expect single moms to break cycles of poverty when faced with these kinds of choices? How can we expect kids to thrive under these kinds of conditions?

Other direct cash pilots have shown that additional monthly income has had profound positive impacts on people. It is time for Oregon to join in this work and support our most vulnerable.

Thank you for your time.