

Submitter: Chelsea Wilkinson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB603

I am very much glad to see a basic income like program being introduced in the Oregon State Legislature. On behalf of Income Movement, a nonprofit that's fighting for a basic income at the federal level, we are excited to see Oregon join other states that are implementing programs that provide unconditional direct cash as part of the solution to alleviating chronic poverty for their citizens. Across the country, there are over a 100 different guaranteed income pilots and programs being implemented that see how effective providing unconditional direct cash is to ensure that individuals who are struggling are given the means to meet their basic needs and overcome these financial hardships that we know are deeply systemic and not only the sole burden of the individual's choices and actions. With rising housing costs, inflation, and the financial wreckage that the pandemic has brought the problem of extreme housing insecurity in communities has been exacerbated immensely.

We support and promote basic income because we know that individuals deserve to survive as a human right and that no one should be without their basic needs simply because they cannot afford to. By designing a program that provides unconditional recurring direct cash it is hopeful to see government creating policy that demonstrates a desire to instill trust, autonomy, and dignity to its citizens and not design programs that builds in too many hoops and barriers for people that adds to the struggle they face as they try to navigate extreme hardship.

To speak more candidly:

I just recently witnessed a scenario during the severe weather emergency our community faced that could have greatly benefited from this. There was a family with a 6 year old child that were unhoused. They were struggling to get shelter, and a local community org thankfully connected with them and got to work to urge the community to raise about \$300 to cover a hotel for a few days. Luckily that goal was met, but I thought about the family in the moment, and how much their circumstances were out of their control. The cold, the uncertainty, the absolute stress of navigating this that no parent wants to go through, and the looming ongoing challenges they will face when their hotel stay runs out. I imagine what it would have looked like if they had this \$1000/month. They wouldn't have had to rely on the hopes that other strangers would see this desperate call and throw them some change. Would they have even been unhoused in this severe weather in the first place if they could have had the means to continue to pay their rent and make ends meet? We must think of solutions that not only solve a problem or meet a need, but can also prevent the problem happening in the first place.

I really hope that this passes and will be following its developments.