

Submitter: Nicholas Cain

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB603

I am a Portland resident and active volunteer and board member for Path Home, a Portland-based nonprofit that supports families experiencing or at risk of homelessness and that is actively running a cash assistance pilot project. In my professional life, I manage philanthropic giving programs, and it is in this role—through interactions with numerous nonprofit leaders and researchers—that I have become a strong advocate for unrestricted cash assistance programs as a way to guarantee a dignified wage and living standard in an uneven and cyclical economy. I am thrilled at the possibility that Oregon may soon join the growing nationwide movement on this issue.

While I understand and appreciate the value of the research that will accompany the proposed pilot to evaluate its effectiveness, I would urge my fellow Oregonians and our elected representatives to look at the countless studies, carried out in diverse contexts, that *already* show that these programs work.

In Stockton, CA, for example, recipients were better able to find full-time work, healthier with increased well-being, more likely to take productive risks to better their financial situation, and more financially stable. International charity GiveDirectly is one of the leading voices on this issue, having used randomized control trials (the highest standard for impact measurement) to evaluate over a decade's worth of cash transfer programs from all over the world. Their evidence shows that recipients "typically end up less poor and put cash towards improving different aspects of their lives" and, importantly, "they do not systematically waste or misuse it."

For those who may be concerned about the program's cost, a cash program running at scale is actually cheaper and more efficient than the patchwork (and restrictive) assistance programs we already pay for to support low income families in our state. And instead of limiting where those public dollars are spent (on specific food items, or a winter heating subsidy, for example), cash assistance programs funnel that money throughout our local economy as individuals choose which needs to tackle first (e.g. back rent, an overdue tuition bill, fees for a local childcare center, or a medical treatment that allows them to be more productive at work).

I sincerely hope that our legislature will approve this bill and am eager to see the incredible impact it will have on the lives of my fellow Oregonians.