

Submitter: Samantha Stevens

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2869

To Whom it May Concern:

As a SHIBA Counselor and future Clinical Gerontological Social Worker, I am keenly aware of the needs of older adults in Oregon and throughout the US. In the case of Oregon, the state is not prepared for the changing demographics that are going to make up our beautiful state. "By 2034, Oregonians 65+ will outnumber children under 18. This is an historic, unprecedented demographic shift which will provide challenges for our health care and long-term services and supports networks but also provides unprecedented opportunities. Oregon needs to prepare for this demographic shift" (Support HB 2869 with the -2 Amendment Multi-Sector Plan for Aging for an Age-Friendly Oregon, n.d.). There are myriad reasons to support this bill:

1. We need to be more prepared (by collecting more information from Oregonians) to address the needs of older adults.
2. Oregon is not prepared to address the fiscal costs of our changing demographics. This lack of preparation will leave many older adults without the services and supports they and their families need to live full, active lives.
3. Older adults need a voice and have so much to offer our state in lived experience and knowledge. We need that experience and knowledge now more than ever with the changing demographics and to recover from post-pandemic issues throughout the state.
4. Oregon has become to be known for it's innovative, equitable, and compassionate care of all its residents. We can improve that and we have the power to do so with this bill.
5. The cost of not serving this population will be much greater than doing so. In Oregon, we are experiencing some of the largest homeless rates across the US and this disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, especially older adults and BIPOC communities.
6. We need to start planning now to avoid an even more monumental task in the future. People are aging and they need us now and going forward.

Thank you for your consideration,

Samantha Stevens

Reference:

Support HB 2869 with the -2 Amendment Multi-Sector Plan for Aging for an Age-Friendly Oregon. (n.d.). Retrieved March 7, 2023, from

<https://d31hzlkh6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20230307/74/38/a5/ed/0a11af7c891b07210a73156c/HB-2869-2-full-information.pdf>