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March 8, 2023

Chair Reynolds and Members of the Early Childhood and Human Services Committee

**RE: Support for Amendments to HB 2869 to Create a Work Group to Develop a Plan for Aging**

Dear Senator Wagner and Speaker Rayfield,

With great enthusiasm, I am writing in support of Proposed Amendments to House Bill 2869 that asks the Oregon Senate President and Oregon Speaker of the House of Representatives to appoint a work group to develop a framework for a multi-sector plan for aging to be administered by the Department of Human Services.

Here at Portland State University—both as Dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs and as University President—I have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of programs and initiatives designed to advance healthy aging in the State of Oregon. As you are aware, as the Baby Boomer generation ages, the proportion of our state’s population that are over the age of 65 will continue to grow. As I have learned through many interactions with advocates and program leaders, aging creates multiple challenges *and* opportunities.


On the challenging front, we need to ensure that our public policies and programs—combined with efforts in other sectors—ensure that seniors have access to affordable housing and health care as well as other positive amenities that sustain life quality. A statewide plan for aging can explore all dimensions of the needs of seniors will enable a multi-sector exploration of the full range of senior needs as well as the adequacy and design of programs and services to serve them.

*The growing ranks of seniors also provide great opportunities.* Citizens of our state are living longer and many seniors wish to be involved and contribute to their communities, schools and neighborhood. These seniors have a wealth of knowledge and experience that represents potential assets in areas such a education, child care, literacy, mentoring and many others. A statewide plan for aging can identify strategies that can link the assets of seniors to areas, organizations, schools, and communities in need of these assets.

Finally, a statewide plan for aging can look across the generations and envision healthy aging as involving people of all ages who will move through different stages of aging during their lives. From this perspective, seniors are not separated out into a distinct group but are included as a component of the aging and growth process of all human beings.

*At the current time*, our state lacks a statewide, comprehensive vision of plan for healthy aging. The proposed work group is the perfect strategy to create such a plan and ensure an even healthier State of Oregon. We truly need a plan for healthy aging in Oregon, a plan that is informed by the full array of sectors that play a role in this important work. If PSU could be of any help in this work, please do not hesitate to ask us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SLP', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen L. Percy  
President  
Portland State University.