



Date: March 30th, 2023
To: House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
From: Jennifer Parrish Taylor, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Urban League of Portland
Re: Support for Funding Opportunities for Non-Profits, HB 2892

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Tran, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2892. My name is Jennifer Parrish Taylor, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Urban League of Portland. The Urban League of Portland is one of Oregon's oldest civil rights and social service organizations, empowering African Americans and others to achieve equality in education, employment, health, economic security, and quality of life across Oregon and SW Washington.

The State of Oregon routinely relies on nonprofits and our specific expertise to fill an essential role in our community; it is often the gaps in service and assistance that we step into. Our role in the community is to promote not only the well-being of the most vulnerable Oregonians through providing basic needs like food and shelter, offering opportunities for education and economic advancement, workforce development, protecting our civil rights, but to ensure that we are also thriving.

Most funding that nonprofits receive comes with strings, with directives on how the funding should be used, and often onerous reporting requirements that often make these financial supports not worth the effort needed to execute them. Money, in the form of unrestricted funds, not only allows nonprofits to determine how best to utilize these funds but communicates that our funder trusts us to make those decisions, that we have the expertise to know what our communities need. But trust is a two-way street. As grantees and contractors, how we're treated reflects on how the state treats our communities and whether we are valued; how the state chooses to contract and with whom, is important and impacts how and where the work happens.

Separating contracts or grants from specific projects as determined by funders, it challenges funders to rethink how they are contracting and allocating their funds and empowers the leaders of a nonprofits to use funding to achieve the organization's goals. We benefit from the breathing room conferred by stable funding to focus on long-term planning goals and can dedicate resources to organizational improvements and other investments. Additionally, we can afford to pay competitive salaries to hire and retain employees, a crisis we are currently facing. Human Service Workers are woefully underpaid though they provide vitally important wraparound services that our communities need and benefit from; these workers (often BIPOC, front-line workers with lived experience) are routinely tasked with meeting human needs by focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems. Hiring and retention has been further exacerbated by the pandemic and according to the Nonprofit Association of Oregon's



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Compensation and Benefits Report, in 2020, “the average turnover rate for full-time staff was 19%, and the average turnover rate for part-time staff was 36%.”¹ If we do not stabilize the workforce with additional funds whether it be in grants as outlined in HB 2892 or other funding mechanisms, we will only see the situation worsen. Please support HB 2892.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Parrish Taylor
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¹<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ed94da22956b942e1d51e12/t/63d95058cbb5e24589229a45/1675186268676/NPMA+one-pager.+Updated+1.30.pdf>