

TO: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services  
FROM: Loren Naldoza  
RE: HB 2991  
DATE: February 20, 2025



Chair Hartman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of HB 2991, which would make meaningful investments to connect families across Oregon to valuable tax credits, such as the earned income tax credit (EITC) and the Oregon Kids Credit.

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes *because no one should be hungry.*" We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty. Unfortunately, hunger in Oregon continues to be on the rise. Last year alone, there were 2.5 million visits to Oregon Food Bank's network of free food markets, food pantries, and meal sites. This represents a 31 percent increase in visits across our network. At a time when more Oregonians are experiencing hunger, we urge the Legislature to pass measures that expand families' financial security, and that eliminate root causes of hunger.

**Oregon consistently has one of the nation's lowest EITC participation rates.**

Data from the most recent available tax year (2021) show that Oregon ranks last in the nation in EITC participation rates.<sup>1</sup> When families do not claim the EITC, they lose out on the benefits that have consistently proven to improve economic opportunities. In 2020, Oregonians claimed—on average—\$2,000 in federal credits. For families with children, the average credit was roughly \$3,000.<sup>2</sup> For many families, these are resources that can be used to prevent food insecurity or to address other household needs, yet many families forgo these resources.

HB 2991 would make these credits more accessible to Oregonians by continuing financial support for the Tax Infrastructure Grant (TIG) program, which provides resources to community organizations helping families to file their taxes. The Legislature should continue its support of this important program so that more working families across the state can best utilize tax credits that the state and federal governments have made available to them.

Oregon Food Bank urges your support of HB 2991.

<sup>1</sup> Internal Revenue Service, *EITC participation rate by states: Tax years 2014 through 2021*, <https://www.eitc.irs.gov/eitc-central/participation-rate-by-state/eitc-participation-rate-by-states>.

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Center for Public Policy, *Oregon is the Last in the Nation in EITC Participation, Underscoring Need to Simplify Tax Filing*, <https://www.ocpp.org/2024/05/16/oregon-last-eitc-participation/>.

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