

Dear House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

Support of HB 3497

There are so many reasons why we need to prepare for a future shift in demographics. We've never faced this in our country before—when elders outnumber young people, caregivers, workers or, potentially, resources. The “baby boomer” bulge in the statistics is just beginning to impact the medical and long term care systems as well as services for the unhoused and many other systems.

We *should* think ahead. Creating the Shared Future Oregon Task Force of experts from many fields is a good idea. It would identify strategies where, possibly, thinking ahead and investing in additional resources now would stave off more serious problems in the future.

One area I can think of that would have great human impact is expanding affordable, accessible housing and services in order to prevent further homelessness. A lot is going on about that topic currently. Can we build enough homes fast enough to keep the most vulnerable elders off the street? We aren't succeeding at the moment, given that the “over-80's” is the fastest growing homeless cohort. It takes time to build new housing; so in the meanwhile, the shared brain-power and synergy of the Shared Future Oregon Task Force could step forward to find new solutions ahead of the curve.

We need this type of strategic planning in all areas of services, business and government. Please support HB 3497.

Sincerely,  
Connie Saldana, Senior already  
Ashland, Oregon