



To: House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services

From: Legislative Team of COIN

Re: Testimony Endorsing HB3497

Date: March 6, 2025

Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Sharp, and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services:

I write today on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) in endorsement of HB 3497. COIN is a coalition of over 50 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important federal and state legislation and engage with elected officials to promote progressive causes for the benefit of all Oregonians.

We strongly support HB3497 to plan for the secure future of Oregon's aging population.

House Bill 3497 proposes the creation of the Shared Future Oregon Task Force to address a shortcoming in our usually proactive state: a plan for our aging population. Oregon is experiencing a demographic shift where those aged 65 and older will soon outnumber those 18 and younger. By 2030, 21% of Oregonians will be over 65. Already, over 30% of our rural population is 65 or over. Oregon has the "oldest" population in the western United States and is aging faster than our neighbors. And yet, there is no coordinated plan for the complex issue of providing a safe, secure future for our aging in their communities.

As one ages, challenges arise. Often, one challenge leads to multiple needs from different services. The Shared Future Oregon Task Force as set forth in HB3497 will gather representatives from 15 relevant state departments to develop a collaborative cross-agency plan emphasizing "housing, overall health, paid and unpaid caregiving, workforce and economic vitality" for aging Oregonians. This cohesive plan will give Oregon families and communities resources to provide for needed elder services.

Considering the present national political scene, we cannot depend on federal programs long term. Oregon must take care of our own. We are not alone. Comparable programs are being developed in 27 other states. It is often said that "it takes a village" to raise a child. Aging is no different. Coordination of public, private and non-profit services is necessary to provide a future that is secure for and retains the dignity of Oregon's aging population. **Pass HB3497** to begin the process in Oregon.

Respectfully,

Jacqueline C. Brown (Milwaukie)

COIN Legislative Team

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