

Submitter: Britney Coats
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Britney Coats. I am a CPS Case Aide for the Oregon Department of Human Services. I am here to speak as a previous frontline worker and current support staff for CPS Workers regarding some of our firsthand experiences with lack of or misappropriation of funds.

I am asking you to fund and assist front line workers in all sectors keep the humanity and human services. From the perspective of a former line worker; I have served as a domestic violence advocate and counseled/ mentored sexually trafficked young women. Our agencies do not need more technology, new phones, or more poorly implemented new policies. What is desperately needed is fully funded community resource programs.

My office in particular serves a rural community. These areas are typically the most underfunded, however inhabitants typically consists of the highest barrier to accessing proper care and services. This demographic also possesses one of the highest needs for comprehensive and effective services.

In our office we are consistently told that there is not enough funding for the needs of the families we serve. I have seen funding denied for for child safety items and I have seen caseworkers have to decide whether they will request funds for formula for an infant or groceries for the family. The example of the formula/groceries was regarding a family living in hazardous conditions related to housing inequities and poverty. Additionally, there is a growing rate of two income families that are requesting access to SNAP, TANF and other programs to subsidize other inflated costs including childcare and medical expenses for themselves and their children with and without special needs.

As costs continue to rise and democracy erodes under this current administration, our most vulnerable populations will continue to become more vulnerable. It is imperative that you fully fund our states safety nets. These safety nets should include low barrier access to community resources that assist with safety, sourcing and sustaining access to food, housing and effective and inclusive mental health care