

OREGON HUNGER TASK FORCE

Creating Policies for a Hunger-Free Oregon

To: Senate
Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
From: Patti Whitney-Wise, Oregon Hunger Task Force
RE: SB 1535 - measured support
Date: February 12, 2026

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Patti Whitney-Wise, and I am the former Executive Director of Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon and the [Oregon Hunger Task Force](#). I officially retired in 2016, but have failed retirement several times because I care about these issues so much. I am back working as a contract lobbyist on behalf of the Task Force.

This letter is written in measured support of SB 1535.

While we understand the intent to pause TANF families from moving automatically to the front of the line for Employment-Related Day Care, I want to underscore a critical reality: without addressing the projected \$73–88 million ERDC budget shortfall, suspending the TANF bypass will mean thousands of families lose access to child care and Oregon’s child care system will face additional strain.

The Oregon Hunger Task Force has long supported efforts to make TANF more responsive and effective in helping families move up and out of poverty. With rising costs and federal cutbacks to low-income supports, the stakes are high. Without adequate ERDC funding, we could see more than 6,000 families fall further behind.

We also support Section 2 of the -2 amendment, which addresses the high cost of liability insurance for providers and helps sustain Oregon’s child care infrastructure.

However, SB 1535 cannot be a substitute for adequate ERDC funding. I strongly urge this Committee and the Legislature to work diligently to fully fund ERDC and prevent devastating cuts to both families and providers. The potential setback in helping families achieve stability is significant and it should concern all of us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Patti Whitney-Wise, Contract Lobbyist
Oregon Hunger Task Force

The Oregon Hunger Task Force was created by the legislature in 1989 to act as a resource within government and as a statewide advocate for Oregonians who are food insecure. The focus of our work is centered on researching and analyzing the many intersecting issues that influence food insecurity. We listen to those who are most impacted and lift up their voices to service providers and decision makers to

strengthen services and policies. And we make recommendations for policies that will have an impact on reducing hunger in the state of Oregon.