



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 3, 2017

To: Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Haywood, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair

Re: **SB 5526** – Department of Human Services Budget – **Comments**

The League has a long standing national position on Meeting Basic Human Needs, which promotes self-sufficiency for individuals and families and invests in social programs designed to prevent or reduce poverty. We acknowledge that the current service level of funding for the Department of Human Services Budget was \$11.316 billion dollars and Oregon's budget deficit for 2017-19 has been quoted at 1.8 billion.

The proposed budgets by the Governor and the Ways and Means Co-Chairs contain serious cuts in services for General Assistance and Oregon Project Independence. Both of these programs offer basic support and services which prevent higher costs in residential facilities of nursing homes in the long run. We support a continued level of funding for these programs.

Investments in support for families with children and workforce training for parents can result in future stability. The path out of poverty and into family wage jobs are the end goal. Food, health services, mental health and substance abuse treatment, can stabilize a family. If parents don't stabilize, the family can break up and children end up in child welfare placements. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families is much less expensive than child welfare.

Staff in residential programs for Intellectually Developmentally Disabled are asking for higher wages. Foster parents and residential treatment programs are asking for higher payments for providing services to children and youth in state custody or placements. Higher payments will help retain staff and foster parents as needed resources for our children and youth.

Should Oregon cut so deeply into funding? No. Where should Oregon get the money for programs? Private donations fund small local social agencies, but public funds are critical to maintain the statewide services.

The League believes it is the Legislature's task to find the revenue to pay for needed services. Tax credits take too much revenue and the sunsets on many tax credits should be allowed to set. **The revenue is needed** for state services, which the public expects to be available for family members, friends and neighbors. Please find the revenue for essential human services programs by adopting **stable and fair revenue policies and tax reforms** to adequately fund services and functions critical to the well-being of Oregonians.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Karen Nibler in black ink.

Karen Nibler
LWVOR Social Policy Coordinator