



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Department of Corrections

Office of the Director

2575 Center Street NE

Salem, OR 97301-4667

Voice: 503-945-0927

Fax: 503-373-1173



February 24, 2016

The Honorable Alan Bates, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair  
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Bates, Co-Chair Nathanson, and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) to express support for HB 4042 as introduced.

As written, HB 4042 establishes a General Assistance (GA) Project that will be administered by the Department of Human Services and that convenes an advisory group to evaluate the efficacy of the project. DOC participated as a member of the General Assistance Steering Committee authorized by the 2014 Legislative Assembly, and our county community corrections partners were among those surveyed by the Portland State University Regional Research Institute for Human Services for the report that was presented to the 2015 Legislative Assembly.

The General Assistance pilot seeks to serve 200 individuals by assisting persons with severe disabilities to receive cash and/or services and care – critical to meet their basic needs – during the period of time between application and receipt of federal disability benefits.

During re-entry planning, DOC works with federal, state, and local agencies to ensure persons releasing from prison to the community are able to access benefits for which they are eligible as soon as possible following release. However, some federal benefits, like Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Income, can take many months and much shepherding to secure. For some individuals, the benefits are not available the day they are released to the community. For this reason, DOC was invited to be part of the General Assistance Steering Committee, and our partners in county community corrections partners were surveyed to learn the impacts of such benefits (or the lack there of) on those released from prison to community supervision. Not surprisingly, factors such as an individual's needs, release circumstances, location of the state to which released, and other services and resources made available to them, play a significant role in release and supervision success. For some of the re-entry population, General Assistance funds and services are a "bridge" over what, for them, is a formidable gap until their federal benefit is received.

The Oregon Department of Corrections strongly supports the General Assistance Project and the passage of HB 4042.

Sincerely,

Colette S. Peters  
Director