



# Advocacy Alert

OREGON FOOD BANK  
OREGON HUNGER RELIEF TASK FORCE

May 2001  
Volume 7 Issue 7



## take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

### Actions:

- Mail your Campaign for Fairness postcard, and
- Call your state legislators and the Governor. Let them know you support the Campaign for Fairness.

### Message:

The state has a responsibility to help its most vulnerable citizens. Don't weaken the safety net!

*Message line for legislators:  
800-332-2313 (outside Salem)  
503-986-1187 (in Salem)*

*Governor's Office:  
503-378-3111*

*To find your legislators on the web, go to:  
[www.leg.state.or.us/findlegstr/findset.htm](http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegstr/findset.htm)*

## Legislative Yellow Pages

### State Legislative Information

effective January 8, 2001  
1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem)  
(503) 986-1187 (in Salem)

### Governor Kitzhaber

(503) 378-3111

### Federal Legislative Contacts

Rep. Wu (District 1)

(503) 326-2901

Rep. Walden (District 2)

(541) 776-4646

Rep. Blumenauer (District 3)

(503) 231-2300

Rep. DeFazio (District 4)

(541) 465-6732

Rep. Hooley (District 5)

(503) 588-9100

Senator Smith

(503) 326-3386

Senator Wyden

(503) 326-7525

## Come to the Campaign for Fairness rally May 14!

On Monday, May 14, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., thousands of Oregonians will converge on the steps of the State Capitol in Salem to make their voices heard about the budget axe hanging over the state's safety net.

We need YOU to be part of the crowd. It's YOUR Oregon, so come and be heard!

The rally will kick off with local church services and groups marching to the Capitol, accompanied by ringing church bells.

Coming together as the Campaign for Fairness, faith-based groups and community organizations are asking the Governor and the

State Legislature to allocate \$159 million to meet the unmet needs of Oregon's most vulnerable citizens. These needs include:

- restoring cuts to Adult and Family Services (\$48 million);
- restoring cuts to Senior and Disabled Services (\$49 million);
- providing adequate funding for affordable housing (\$30 million); and
- establishing tax equity for low-income households via refundable tax credits (\$32 million).

The \$159 million price tag is nearly equal to the estimated revenue impact of the Measure 88 tax cut passed last November. That measure in-

creased the deduction of federal taxes on Oregon tax returns from \$3,000 to \$5,000. More than 80% of Measure 88's tax reductions benefit the top 31% of income tax returns, i.e., those with personal income greater than \$50,000.

With the state facing a huge budget deficit, legislators and the Governor need to be encouraged to explore ways to raise more state revenue, including using kicker funds if necessary. Otherwise, the safety net will be damaged and we all pay the price.

For more information about the May 14 rally or to get Campaign postcards, call Cassandra Garrison, 503-282-0555 or 800-777-7427 x 210.

## Education: the key to moving out of poverty

According to the University of Oregon's recent study of people leaving welfare, 86 percent of respondents desired more education or in-depth job training.

Since 1994, when Oregon received a waiver to implement its own welfare reform program prior to federal welfare reform in 1996, Oregon has been a "work first" state, requiring families in need of state income assistance to take the first available job.

Only short-term training is allowed for those seeking to improve their income and still receive some state assistance. Yet, study after study point to higher education and job training as the key factors in moving people, particularly women, out of poverty.

Not surprisingly, the UO study found that those with more education had a higher rate of employment and a lower rate of poverty. In fact, one of the study's primary recommendations is to boost access to higher education and job training by allowing education to count as a work activity so parents can pursue more education and training and still receive state support for their children.

Rep. Deborah Kafoury has introduced **HB 3401**, which would create a "**Parents as Scholars**" grant program that would be administered by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission. Students would receive grants in an amount equal to the amount of public assistance the qualified stu-

dent's household would receive under the state's cash grant program. Such grants would allow them to attend school and meet the basic needs of their children. The program is modeled after a successful program in Maine.

Currently, HB 3401 is before the House Student Achievement and School Accountability Committee, awaiting a full public hearing and work session. If you're interested in helping low-income parents pursue more education and training, contact the committee chairs and ask them to pass HB 3401 on to the full House: Rep. Vic Backlund, Chair; Rep. Elaine Hopson, Vice-Chair; Rep. Tootie Smith, Vice-Chair.

**State Bill Watch**

Here are a few of the more than four thousand bills currently making their way through the state legislature.

**Full Disclosure on Ballot Titles (Senate Bill 464 and House Bill 2969)**

Introduced by Sen. Susan Castillo, Rep. Lane Shetterly, and Rep. Dan Gardner, these companion bills would require additional disclosure information on ballot titles for measures calling for new spending or tax cuts.

Currently, ballot titles for measures that reduce funding available for other existing services (either by cutting taxes or calling for new spending) are not allowed to say how other services might be affected by revenue changes if the measure passes.

SB 464/HB 2969 would require these ballot title captions to contain the words "reduces funding available for" and then list three services currently receiving the most money from the affected revenue source. For example, the caption for a measure diverting state lottery funds would state "reduces funding available for education, economic development, natural resources."

SB 464 had a hearing in the Senate Rules and Redistricting Committee on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The bill is awaiting a work session to move it to the Senate floor. HB 2969 had a hearing on April 25<sup>th</sup>. For more information, contact the Center for Constructive Citizen Action, (503) 233-1429.

students receiving free or reduced-price meals having summer meals available by 2004.

Please ask your state representative to support HB 3506. For more information, contact Patti Whitney-Wise, (503) 963-2290 or [patti.w@hcs.state.or.us](mailto:patti.w@hcs.state.or.us).

**Fair Housing Protection for Section 8 Recipients (House Bill 2532)**

Introduced by Rep. Kathy Lowe, this bill would prohibit discrimination in real property transactions based on a person receiving federal rent subsidy payments. Currently, Oregon's fair housing law does not protect Section 8 recipients from being denied housing simply because their source of income is a Section 8 voucher. HB 2532 would correct this situation.

This bill does not require landlords to take any tenant with a Section 8 voucher. Rather, it simply means that landlords could not use the receipt of Section 8 assistance to deny housing. Landlords would still be allowed to use standard screening criteria to determine acceptance of a particular tenant.

HB 2532 had a public hearing in the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Law on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The bill is awaiting a work session to move it to the House floor. For more information, contact the Community Alliance of Tenants, (503) 460-9702 or [cat@aracnet.com](mailto:cat@aracnet.com).

**New food stamp application June 1<sup>st</sup>**

A new, shorter food stamp application is coming to all Adult and Family Services (AFS) offices on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The two-page application (one page, front and back) has been test piloted in the Portland area and Hood River/The Dalles over the last six months. Clients like it, and AFS staff have worked diligently to iron out any problems with the new intake process.

If you have any questions about the shortened application, contact Nancy Weed, Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator, (503) 998-6194 or [nancyjweed@aol.com](mailto:nancyjweed@aol.com).

**WIC Program likely to turn away children if President's budget passes**

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, an essential public health program, will be forced to turn away eligible individuals if President Bush's proposed budget for fiscal year 2002 makes it through Congress.

Despite large budget surpluses, the Bush Administration proposes a \$49 million increase in WIC funding, a meager 1.2 percent increase over this year's budget. The bottom line is that the WIC budget request is insufficient to respond to the increase in need that will accompany a slowing economy and the anticipated rise in unemployment. There would also not be enough money to offset the effects of inflation on nutrition services and administrative costs.

This year nationwide WIC will serve an average of 7,245,000 women, infants, and children per month. In Oregon, WIC serves an average of 91,330 participants per month.

The new administration's mantra "leave no child behind"

rings hollow when an important program such as WIC is not adequately funded. WIC helps improve the health and nutritional intake of low-income pregnant, breast-feeding and post-partum women and their children under age five. The program has contributed to better birth outcomes and reductions in childhood anemia, key indicators of the health of America's children.

To find out more about WIC, see [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic) or [www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/wic](http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/wic). To voice your concerns about the WIC budget request, contact your members of Congress (see other side for phone numbers).

**Summer food bill needs your help**

Children who receive free and reduced-price meals during the school year also need meals during the summer break. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a federally-funded program administered by Oregon's Department of Education, serves many of the same children who rely on school meals while school is in session.

Any school with 50% or more of its students receiving free or reduced-price meals is eligible to run a summer food program. Unfortunately, only about 14% of Oregon's eligible children are receiving summer meals.

**House Bill 3506**, introduced by Rep. Kathy Lowe, would require all school districts with high-need areas to offer SFSP meal sites, or make sure another qualified group is offering meals in the community. The bill would phase in the requirement over three years, ending with all schools with 50% or more

The Advocacy Alert is published jointly by the Oregon Food Bank (OFB) Advocacy Department and the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF).

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