



MEDFORD
PLANNING

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Human Service Committee
From: Matt Brinkley, Planning Director, City of Medford
Date: March 8, 2023
Subject: SB 241

I am writing this memorandum on the behalf of the City of Medford and its partners within the housing development and social services communities. We have developed and administer an array of programs that support the development of housing and the delivery of social services for residents and transient members of our community. I agree with what I think are the goals of the proposed legislation: to protect state and local resources by ensuring the federal resources are used efficiently. But it has been my experience that service providers already work to identify any and all resources that may assist those who seek help, so SB 241 will not appreciably achieve anything new.

Not only is the proposed legislation unneeded, I believe that it would likely result in negative outcomes for those we are trying to help. State-mandated and proscribed engagement between service providers and their clients will only undermine their ability to most efficiently and effectively deliver services and address the needs of those in our community. Members of the legislature should be well aware that our service providers are faced with mounting demands on their time, energy, and financial resources. SB241, as it is currently written, would further burden the individuals who all of us rely on to connect those in need with support.

SB241 would “require the resident to apply for or enroll in a federal program or assistance or benefits” before “providing assistance or benefits.” In the real world, imposing more regulatory burdens on the timely delivery of services can have negative outcomes that affect vulnerable members of our community in their most dire moments of need. Consider the following example:

A social service provider is attempting to find housing for a single mother fleeing domestic violence. But SB241 mandates that the provider must first require and, presumably, confirm that she has enrolled in “federal programs of assistance”. Whatever delay is created by this

additional administrative task means that this person who is seeking help must endure continued housing insecurity or homelessness, as well as an ongoing threat to her personal safety.

I doubt that the authors of the proposed legislation intend to further complicate and make less effective the delivery of social and other services to those who need them most. The benefits of this bill would be negligible, but its negative consequences for service providers and those they serve would be significant. Therefore we oppose further consideration of this legislation.

Thank you for your public service and attention to our concerns with the proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Brinkley".

Matt Brinkley, AICP
Planning Director
City of Medford