

May 18, 2006

To: LCOG Executive Committee

From: Kay Metzger

Subject: Review of “An Analysis of Tax Expenditures in Oregon”

Background:

Article X.3.d(4) of the Disability Services Advisory Committee By-Laws describes the responsibilities of the Advocacy Committee as follows:

- “(a) Monitor, review and recommend action to the Councils on community, state and national policies, programs, and actions (e.g. laws, regulations, rules, budgets, etc.) which affect seniors and persons with disabilities.
- (b) Maintain close liaison with local, state and federal elected officials.
- (c) Stimulate public interest in, and support of, programs and policies which have been proposed or initiated to meet the problems and needs of Lane County’s seniors and persons with disabilities.”

As you are all aware, the programs serving seniors and persons with disabilities have experienced significant cuts during the past four years, primarily due to state revenue shortfall. It is clear that state funding has a critical impact on the quality and level of services provided. As a result of these cuts and the ongoing threat to services for seniors and persons with disabilities, the Advocacy Committee began to explore ways to effectively fulfill its charge to “recommend action to the Councils on community, state and national policies, programs and actions which affect seniors and persons with disabilities”. The Committee began a review of potential improvements to how our services are funded. During the discussion, the impact of tax expenditures on state revenue was raised. Since this was a subject many on the Committee were not familiar with, a written analysis on the subject was requested. A University of Oregon graduate student completed the research and worked with a sub-committee of the Advocacy Committee to write the paper. Committee members actively participated in additional editing to produce the paper included in your packets.

Concurrent with the research and writing of the paper, the Advocacy Committee held several “Legislative Conversations” with state elected officials. There were four “Conversations” held between November 2005 and February 2006. Important issues were discussed at the meetings, and the Committee came away with improved knowledge and insight into effective advocacy. Additionally, several topics emerged as themes. One of the common themes was the need for tax reform, and another was the need for special interest groups to work together on a common issue to be most effective. The Advocacy Committee hopes to accomplish both of those through this effort.

Outcomes:

By introducing this paper, the Advocacy Committee hopes to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Consistent with the charge of the Advocacy Committee, (per the DSAC By-Laws) recommend action that has the potential for improvements in funding services provided to seniors and persons with disabilities;
- Stimulate a discussion, and hopefully agreement, amongst a cross section of special interest groups on a topic of mutual interest and benefit; and
- Upon approval from the LCOG Board, collaborate with interested state elected officials to move forward legislatively.

Requested Action:

This is an information item only, thus no action is requested of the Executive Committee at this time. Upon receiving approval from the Senior Services and the Disability Services Advisory Councils (both Councils meet in May), the Advocacy Committee will present this item to the LCOG Board at its June meeting.