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A MINISTER IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Testimony Before The Senate Finance and Revenue Committee
SB 349 - Earned Income Tax Credit**

March 11, 2011

Delivered by The Rev. Chuck Currie

Good afternoon.

My name is Rev. Chuck Currie and I am a minister in the United Church of Christ. My professional life has been spent working on issues related to homelessness and poverty and I come today to support SB 349, the improved Earned Income Tax Credit, which is supported by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and other faith organizations in our state.

The leaders of the National Council of Churches recently released a statement that read: "There is no greater concern among the churches of Christ than for those in this nation who live in poverty. This could hardly be otherwise because Jesus himself lived among the poor: loving them, eating and drinking with them, healing them, and speaking words of justice and assurance that God's own love for the poor is unsurpassed."

Each day our churches - alongside other faith traditions -work to alleviate poverty by providing faith-based social service programs, volunteers for local programs, and donations of money to area non-profits. As the acting minister of Salem's First Congregational United Church of Christ, I see people come to our church every day seeking emergency assistance. We are unable to meet the needs of the human tidal wave that come to our door each day - men, women, and families with children.

Ronald Reagan once called the Earned Income Tax Credit the best anti-poverty tool the government could wield. A vote in favor of SB 349 will help those of us in the faith community better partner with our state government in the fight to end poverty. Churches and other faith communities are not equipped to undertake this great moral challenge alone. We desperately need the state of Oregon to enact tax policies that help people lift themselves out of poverty and hopelessness. Passage of this piece of legislation could be one of the most significant achievements this session.

Thank you for your consideration.



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