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## Testimony in Support of HB 2890 - Repeal the Prohibition on Inclusive Housing & Restore Local Control

Human Services and Housing Committee – March 22, 2013

Submitted by: **John Miller, Oregon Opportunity Network**

Chair Tomei and Members of the Committee:

I write to urge your support for HB2890. This Bill would simply repeal the current preemption and allow communities to choose whether or not to have an inclusive housing policy as a tool in their tool box for the development of affordable homes. Currently, too many Oregonians are struggling to find suitable affordable homes in healthy communities. Because of a lack of affordable homes, many families are unable to live in resource rich communities and are segregated to more distressed areas, often far from jobs, concentrating poverty and causing traffic congestion and high commuting costs. Inclusive Housing policy is a proven way to change this challenging community dynamic

In 1999, the Legislature passed ORS 197.309, banning local jurisdictions from adopting a mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance. Texas is the only other state to prohibit this tool. Inclusionary zoning, better described as Inclusive Housing, is a tool used to ensure new housing is developed for families with a range of incomes. It enables cities to ensure that veterans, the elderly, people with disabilities and others working to make ends meet are not “locked out” of residential developments in resource-rich areas.

Inclusive Housing is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Cities need customized applications and there needs to be a genuine dialogue between cities, developers and community organizations. When done right, inclusive housing is revenue-neutral for developers, while still providing a public benefit. Inclusive housing ordinances can work throughout diverse communities, with or without urban renewal.

Repealing the prohibition and restoring local control would enable local jurisdictions to use this tool and to work with developers and the community to find balanced approaches. It is particularly important to add options to the affordable housing tool box during this time of diminishing resources.

Residential segregation, concentrated poverty and limited opportunity for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities are serious, pervasive issues across Oregon. We need to increase opportunity, access and mobility in the housing market for all. We urge you to support HB 2890.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Miller' in a cursive script.

John Miller

Executive Director