



Member Organizations

211 Info
AFSCME Local #3135
Bienestar
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
City of Eugene
City of Gresham
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Clackamas Housing Action Network
Coalition for a Livable Future
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team, Inc.
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Hacienda CDC
Homeless Families Coalition
Housing Advocacy Group of Washington Co.
Housing Development Center
Human Solutions
Impact Northwest
JOIN
Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Metro
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon Action
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Authorities
Oregon Opportunity Network
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc.
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Rose CDC
St. Vincent DePaul of Lane County
Shelter Care
Sisters Of The Road
Street Roots
Transition Projects, Inc.
Washington County
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services

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SB 558A

Foreclosure Resolution

Testimony to House Consumer Protection & Government Efficiency

Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Government Efficiency,

Chair Holvey, Co-Chairs Lively and Richardson, Members of the Committee

My name is Janet Byrd. I am the Executive Director of Neighborhood Partnerships, and I am the convener of the Housing Alliance. The Housing Alliance is a coalition of organizations serving all parts of Oregon. We are concerned about the availability of safe, decent and affordable housing for all Oregon residents. While we are particularly focused as a coalition on advocacy on behalf of Oregonians who have limited incomes, we also know that there is a continuum of housing needs in our communities. Homeownership opportunities for households with modest incomes are an essential piece of the housing continuum. Homeownership still provides the best pathway to household financial resilience and to building a better future for families and communities.

Senate Bill 558A improves Oregon's foreclosure mediation law. The Housing Alliance supports SB 558 A because foreclosure continues to threaten the foundations of our state and our communities. Recent numbers indicate that 1 out of 13 homeowners are a month or more behind on their mortgages, 132,000 are underwater and far too many Oregonians continue to struggle in communications with their lender.

SB 558 A draws on best practices to address this problem. State foreclosure mediation laws have a proven track record of increasing the number of mutually beneficial workouts for homeowners and lenders. This bill requires the largest lenders to participate in a resolution conference with homeowners prior to starting a judicial or non-judicial foreclosure to discuss mutually beneficial alternatives to foreclosure.

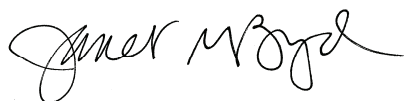
A robust foreclosure resolution process is a tool to speed up foreclosure timelines, avoid any potential backlog in the courts and create positive outcomes for both homeowners and for the investors who own the loans. SB 558 A was developed with input from counselors, facilitators, agencies, and others to simplify and streamline the administrative requirements for banks and homeowners, to ensure the program will work.

SB 558 A builds upon the hard work that has been done to create a strong network of foreclosure counselors and mediators in all Oregon communities. These counselors and mediators are poised to help homeowners understand their options and participate in finding mutually beneficial solutions.

As you know, SB 558A was a highly negotiated bill on the Senate side. While the Housing Alliance along with other advocates remains concerned that too many homeowners will be unable to access this important tool because of how we've defined exempt lenders, we urge your support of SB 558A as is, and urge you to speed it on its way to the Governor's desk. We look forward to seeing the data available to us between now and next February and to discussions about possible tweaks to that exemption level.

Housing is the foundation of our communities. SB 558A helps our neighbors and families make the best possible decisions to ensure housing stability and helps ensure the best possible outcomes for all of Oregon. We urge your AYE vote on SB 558A. Thank you for your service on behalf of Oregon communities.

Janet Byrd
On Behalf of the Housing Alliance

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Byrd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".