

April 15, 2015

Dear Representatives of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing:

It has come to my attention that Albany is being considered for a Housing First Pilot Program with HB3420-Relating to assistance for persons experiencing homelessness.

Albany has made many strides in reducing the homeless population, since we closed a long time homeless camp back in 2006. After establishing ten-year plans to address homelessness in Linn and Benton counties, we identified the housing first approach as a viable tool to moving someone into housing in order to become self-sufficient.

After reading the bill and the amendment, I suggest the following changes to be made on page 5 since Albany is referenced as the pilot program.

Here are the suggested changes on page 5.

Yellow is strike out.

Green is added text.

Red is notations.

Regarding (a) Albany homeless providers all recognize we will never 'end' homelessness, as someone might have housing today and not tomorrow. Our Ten-Year Homeless Housing Plans refer to 'reducing' homelessness.

(5) (A): Albany currently has a large supply of rental housing and more housing should not be the priority. The priority for the homeless should be for rental assistance.

(B) Albany already has many employment opportunities, but we lack qualified skilled job-seekers. Programs are needed for training the homeless to gain skills to become employable.

(c) The pilot program needs assured funding to support it for several years in order to see a measurable outcome.

(6) I have concerns about Albany being identified for a pilot program without some assurances that other communities will not send their homeless residents here to enter the program. The program should include an intergovernmental agreement among Albany, the State and Community Services Consortium before implementation.

“(5) In implementing the Housing First Pilot Program and to the extent possible, the State Housing Council, the Housing and

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Community Services Department, the Department of Human Services and the Oregon Health Authority shall:

“(a) Prioritize state and federal funding opportunities that support efforts to reduce ~~and end~~ homelessness through the system of care

implemented by the program;

“(b) Identify and implement initiatives and other programs that:

“(A) Increase ~~the supply of~~ rental housing ~~assistance needed to meet the demand for housing~~ for individuals and families who are experiencing or may experience homelessness; and

“(B) ~~Increase the availability of employment opportunities~~ Establish job training programs for individuals who are experiencing homelessness;

“(c) Train homelessness specialists and place them in centers that are easily accessed by individuals and families experiencing homelessness, ~~subject to sustainable funding before implementation~~; and

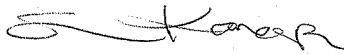
The following (d) has already been researched and documented in the Ten-Year Homeless Plans adopted with many counties in 2008-2009. This would take valuable resources away from the “A” “B” “C” (above) which are more effective tools in serving the homeless.

~~“(d) Contract with a state institution of higher education to research and document the costs of homelessness in this state, including but not limited to the costs incurred by law enforcement agencies, courts, jails and hospitals responding to situations involving individuals and families experiencing homelessness, for the purpose of obtaining recommendations on how best to allocate public funds to prevent and end homelessness.~~

“(6) The Housing and Community Services Department, in consultation with the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section, ~~including an inter-governmental agreement with any City identified for a Pilot Program.~~

If the above changes were added to the bill’s amendment, then I would welcome the Housing First Pilot Program.

Thank you,



Sharon Konopa
Mayor of Albany

cc: Senator Sara Gelser and Representative Val Hoyle and Andy Olson

