

Representative Phil Barnhart  
900 Court Street NE, H-279  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Warm Greetings Representative Barnhart,

Hard working low-income Oregon families need **your** help! As a champion supporting, “our ability to support one another, protect our communities most vulnerable citizens, and working towards a greater tomorrow will be our key to success as a community,” you know the importance and transformational impact, stability and permanent step out of poverty that homeownership brings. We are asking you to **join** us in supporting HB-2690-1.

I am in a unique position as an elected Forest Grove City Councilor, the child of generational poverty, and a staff member for Willamette West Habitat for Humanity, to see firsthand how affordable homeownership provides opportunities for families to thrive and helps stabilize the communities we share.

Right now, the demand for our programs outweigh our capacity to build homes. That is why we are pursuing this legislation. Throughout Oregon most Habitat for Humanity affiliates currently receive a tax exemption starting from the time we have an active residential building permit. Affiliates in two counties (Jackson and Yamhill) also receive an exemption from the time the build site is first acquired, which would be incredibly beneficial and enable Willamette West Habitat for Humanity to serve an additional family every 4 years.

The timeframe referred to in HB-2690-1 amendments extends from when a site is acquired to when every home on that site is sold. Our affiliate most often purchases bare land multi-home sites. The overall pre-development process up until permits can take up to 3 years with another 2- 4 years to build all the homes on the property. In ideal conditions, and without facing NIMBY challenges, environmental hurdles or other unforeseen hiccups, it most often takes us 6 to 7 years to complete a multifamily site of 40 homes.

Phil, please **help** us make more simple, decent, safe and affordable homes available to our hard working families. Nearly 25,000 households in Washington County qualify for our program. Many live in homes that have drippy, squishy ceilings and floors, mold, cracked windows, and even drug deals going on outside. Families often share dwellings to afford high rents, and still spend 30-40% of their income on housing. Eighteen hundred children in the Beaverton School District alone are considered homeless. Many are referred to as ‘couch surfers’, because they sleep on couches of friends when the family home is too over-crowded.

Thank you, for considering this important legislation that would support more families hoping to realize the dream of homeownership. If you have any questions I would be happy to discuss the measure more fully.

Very best wishes, Elena

Elena Uhing  
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