

May 4, 2015

Members of the Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Dear Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair, Representative Peter Buckley, Co-Chair, and Committee Members:

We share many common values as Oregonians, including the belief that all people deserve equal opportunities to succeed. Our vision for Oregon's future includes housing opportunities for all people: housing that provides a safe, secure home for a family or an individual. A stable home gives us an opportunity to build better lives and provides a foundation from which we can move forward with our goals.

Even though we feel very fortunate to live in affordable housing, as people who continue to live in poverty we are constantly faced with many hard choices. Yet thousands of other Oregonians are not as fortunate as we have been; health care, food, children's educational needs, utilities, and transportation are all basic needs that must be constantly juggled when the majority of a family's cash needs to go towards rent.

We believe solutions are possible. We urge you to support the **2015 Housing Opportunity Agenda** brought to you by a large statewide coalition of housing and service providers. Key pieces of the agenda include support for:

- SB 5513 will increase funding for short-term emergency housing and provide resources to support shelters for families experiencing homelessness. At the other end of the housing continuum, this bill will also help ensure that struggling homeowners have the knowledge and support to avoid foreclosures.
- Lottery-backed bonds will help to preserve affordability for existing, extremely low income housing that is at risk of conversion to market rate apartments.
- A combination of general obligation bonds and lottery-backed bonds will create a \$100 million fund to build new affordable housing (approximately 4,000 new apartments).

The Oregon IDA Initiative is another piece of the agenda that we strongly believe helps people to succeed:

- HB 2011 & SB 50 will allow individuals living in poverty an opportunity to actually save for the future and have their savings matched by investors who receive a tax credit. These Individual Development Accounts (IDA) will allow people to maintain hope: to pursue a career education program, to someday purchase a home, and to save for retirement.

As members of **Home Forward's Resident Advisory Committee**, our role is to advise our agency's Board of Commissioners about policy issues of importance to the majority of residents and participants in our programs. The proposals that are now before the 2015 Legislature have an even wider impact:

Your support for the **2015 Housing Opportunity Agenda** can help thousands of people who are on waiting lists throughout the state with new hope for the future. Thank you for your consideration of our letter of support and all the work you do to ensure Oregon remains a treasured place for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

- Benita Legarza, Home Forward Resident Commissioner, Co-Chair Resident Advisory Committee; nuggle_bug@hotmail.com; Downtown Portland
- Tomi-Rene Hettman, Co-Chair, Resident Advisory Committee; dancingbuddha24@hotmail.com; NE Portland
- Trish Baker; Resident Advisory Committee; c/o pamelakambur@homeforward.org; NW Portland
- Kerry Bassett; Resident Advisory Committee; kerryjbassett@earthlink.com; Downtown Portland
- Maria Fleischman; Resident Advisory Committee; mariafeish@hotmail.com; Outer SE Portland



... Signing on behalf of Home Forward's
Resident Advisory Committee Members

- Martha Terry, Co-Chair, Resident Advisory Committee; martha.terry4@gmail.com; Outer SE Portland
- LaQuida Landford, Resident Advisory Committee; l_landford@yahoo.com; Old Town Portland
- Jose A. Limia-Gonzalez; Resident Advisory Committee; jalimiag@live.com; SW Portland

Cc: Rep.DavidGomberg@state.or.us, Rep.MikeNearman@state.or.us, Rep.TobiasRead@state.or.us,
Rep.GailWhitsett@state.or.us, Rep.BradWitt@state.or.us, Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us,
Sen.BetsyJohnson@state.or.us, Sen.RodMonroe@state.or.us, Rep.ValHoyle@state.or.us,
Rep.JohnHuffman@state.or.us, Rep.TinaKotek@state.or.us, Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us,
Sen.PeterCourtney@state.or.us, Sen.FredGirod@state.or.us,

Members of Home Forward Board of Commissioners & Michael Buonocore, Executive Director

Omar Carrillo Tinajero, Neighborhood Partnerships