



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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8 May 2015

Co-Chair Sen. Fred Girod  
Co-Chair Rep. Tobias Read  
and Honorable Members of Joint Committee  
On Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
VIA EMAIL: [WaysandMeans.CapitalConstructionSub@state.or.us](mailto:WaysandMeans.CapitalConstructionSub@state.or.us)

Re: \$100 Million for Affordable Housing

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Girod, Rep. Read and Honorable Committee Members:

Affordable housing is needed for homeless to become home-ful and for folks dealing with mental health issues to integrate into the community. While there is some overlap between these populations, supportive housing is an ongoing need of both.

Benton County and the City of Corvallis have a strong “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness” committee co-chaired by a county commissioner and the Corvallis mayor. There is buy-in from many local agencies like Community Outreach Inc., Housing First Coalition, LOVE Inc., a local school district, Good Samaritan Hospital, Veteran Services, and more.

One of the limiting factors hampering the good work performed by these organizations is the lack of housing. Over and over we hear “we have nowhere to send people; there is no housing”. Community Outreach Inc., a temporary shelter for families is perpetually full. There is not enough permanent housing to which these families can transition. If additional affordable housing was available these families could be prioritized for access. This would let them move onto a path of developing a safe, stable environment for their children that can lead to successful and healthy citizens.

The Department of Justice has been critical of Oregon’s lack of investments for people with major mental illness and their reintegration into communities. The challenge of affordable housing is part of the problem. Counties can provide excellent services but without housing opportunities, this population can easily end up as part of the homeless contingent.

The \$100M recommended by the Governor to help mitigate some of these closed loops by providing straight paths to success in permanent domiciles is critical to the betterment of our most vulnerable families. We ask you to support our Governor’s proposal.

With respect,

  
Jay Dixon  
Chair

  
Annabelle Jaramillo  
Commissioner

  
Anne Schuster  
Commissioner