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January 29, 2016

State Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer  
State of Oregon  
900 Court St. NE, H-484  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Human Services and Housing Committee:

We write on behalf of Home Forward, the largest provider of affordable housing in Oregon. Home Forward offers a variety of housing options to families and individuals who earn low incomes, including more than 6,000 apartments to rent and over 9,000 Housing Choice Vouchers.

The federal public housing and tax credit programs mandate that the majority of Home Forward's portfolio not utilize no cause evictions and because that policy aligns with our mission to assure that people of the community are sheltered, we have carried that policy over to our entire housing portfolio.

Home Forward is an organization that is committed to the people we currently serve and to the families and individuals who may need our housing decades from now. Because of that, we need to maintain a healthy portfolio that earn revenues to maintain our properties and help us grow to meet the community's need. Our policy has not jeopardized our ability to meet these goals.

No cause evictions that occur in the private market are having a negative effect on Home Forward's ability to operate the Housing Choice Voucher program. As rents continue to rise and more families receive no cause evictions, voucher holders and newly evicted families face a difficult challenge of finding safe and affordable homes that meet their needs.


We know that a stable, safe place to call home is the key to success for our neighbors in need. Given the breadth of our programs, we understand the policy and resource strategies that can put us back on track to meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable Oregonians.

We urge you to take bold action this session for housing opportunity, including the adoption of HB 4001. In addition to emergency renter protections and lifting the ban on Inclusionary Zoning through HB 4001, we also urge the Legislature to invest in housing development, preservation, and homelessness prevention.

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Thank you very much for your consideration of HB 4001, and for all your work on behalf of Oregonians.

Sincerely,



James M. Smith  
Home Forward Board Chair



Jill C. Smith  
Chief Operating Officer