



ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NETWORK OF OREGON

February 1st, 2016

Chair, Vice Chair(s) and Members of the Committee:

The Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) is the oldest Asian and Pacific Islander grassroots organization, uniting communities to achieve social justice. We leverage the collective strength of our 7,000 members statewide to advance equity through empowering, organizing and advocating with our communities.

We urge your support for HB 4001.

Our organization is invested in the passage of HB 4001 because we understand the health of our communities is not limited to individual behavior. The relationship between housing quality, housing stability and health extends well beyond being forced to make the choice between heating your home and feeding your children. There is a clear link between zip code, who is at risk for displacement and who experiences health disparities.

We all know the statistics: those who are most at risk for further displacement or who live in poor quality housing are disproportionately African Americans, immigrant families, the working poor, rural Oregonians and single parents. Historically these communities have been most at risk for chronic disease, asthma, poor nutrition, and depression, and they are also the most likely to be uninsured, experience discrimination, poverty, homelessness and overcrowding.

This daily risk creates toxic stress that permeates the home. Parents living in poor quality housing, or who struggle to afford their units, have a harder time shielding children from this environment. Maternal stress can put a child physically at risk: research by OHSU found the first 1,000 days of a child's life to be as much a determinate of chronic disease as genetics. For new parents, toxic stress affects a child's ability to develop cognitive skills, leading to behavioral issues, and ultimately affecting a child's ability to perform well in school.

The 2015 legislative session brought forth hard-earned, unanimous support for ELL funding across the state. It acknowledged our growing, diverse communities and their specific needs to grow into competitive adults. Lack of affordable housing, and the threat of displacement due to rising rents, threatens to undercut this investment in our students' success. Studies show just one forced in-district move can set a child's education behind as much as 3-4 months. For immigrant students, English language learners and/or students with a disability, this creates a cliff almost impossible to climb. It threatens to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and ultimately increase the risk of poor health in early adulthood.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) lists inclusionary zoning among one of the first steps in combatting the health effects of gentrification as described. Inclusionary Zoning promotes health by stabilizing existing communities, capitalizing on community social ties and strengths. It reduces chaos through access to quality housing and promotes access to the social benefits of economically advantaged neighborhoods.



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Inclusionary Zoning has been shown to offer development without displacement, and brings with it a myriad of ways to access social and physical environments that promote good health and stabilize at-risk communities in the over 500 jurisdictions where implemented. With the housing crisis bleeding to all corners of the state, it makes no sense to continue prohibiting local governments from using all options available to address their specific need.

For example, local control could benefit Multnomah County. Lack of affordable housing options has pushed priority populations to poverty-concentrated neighborhoods across the county, where neighborhood crime is most frequent, and barriers to accessing transportation, services, and grocers are common. Unsurprisingly, this is also where early childhood and adolescent health is most poor.

Being pushed to the outskirts of the county has brought no financial refuge for families. The wave of development threatens to displace these communities once again through rent increases and no-fault evictions. According to the Portland Development Commission, some of the most diverse, low-income neighborhoods in the outskirts of the county have seen the highest rent increases over the course of the last year. Lents, Montavilla, and the Parkrose neighborhoods have seen neighborhood increases of 14%, 14.8%, and 16.9% respectively. Our members simply cannot afford these rent increases nor their forced relocation. HB 4001 could buffer this experience for these vulnerable families by allowing pro rata protections on rent increases and notices for termination.

Inclusionary Zoning will not be the end-all-be-all solution for Oregon's affordable housing crisis, but it needs to be on the table. We must consider the driving factors displacing families, such as no-fault evictions and exorbitant rent increases as we begin to craft an Oregon that works for all residents.

We urge you to pass HB 4001. Now is the time to release control to local governments to ensure the needs of all their communities are being met. Now is the time to support families and ensure they have the rights and resources to thrive.

Thank you for your time,
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