



Sisters Habitat for Humanity
PO Box 238 – 141 West Main St.
Sisters, Oregon 97759
(541) 549-1193, www.sistershabitat.org

Jan. 28, 2016

House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 4064

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to request your support of HB 4064. This bill establishes the framework for a statewide mortgage leveraging program that has the capacity to meaningfully increase the number of Habitat for Humanity homebuyers we serve every year.

In Sisters, we have a severe lack of affordable housing options. Rental vacancy rates continue to be under 1%. Many families are living in travel trailers, doubled up in households and in the forest. Others are cost-burdened, paying well over 50% of their income for rent. Young families have left Sisters as a result of the lack of good housing they can afford. This situation has put pressure on our schools that are losing income due to declining enrollment. It is also having an impact on employers who are having an increasingly difficult time finding employees to fill jobs, especially service related jobs.

Sisters Habitat is the only consistent builder of affordable housing in our community. Since our inception 25 years ago, we have helped 57 families purchase safe, energy efficient, affordable homes. We continue to build an average of three homes per year. In a town of 2,000 people this is quite an accomplishment!

Our success is due in large part to the income we generate in our Thrift and ReStore operations as well as to the over 200 volunteers who work in the stores and build the houses. We currently have seven selected families working toward a home of their own with additional applicants in the pipeline.

One of the greatest challenges to meeting the growing need for our program is the capital intensive nature of the work we do. Our goal is to create a fund that will make it possible for us to leverage 92% of a newly built home's mortgage principal on the day of closing. These funds will immediately increase our capacity to build homes and purchase land. Repayment of the leveraged mortgages will create a revolving fund with Habitat Oregon that will continue to provide affiliates across the state with much needed capital needed to serve Oregon families.

Having a mortgage leveraging program, similar to other states, will make it possible for us to serve more families. Thank you for considering this important program and for your dedication to improving our Oregon communities.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clark S Brody".

Clark S Brody
President, Sisters Habitat for Humanity