

Emailed Testimony

- From: Russ Dondero (dondero1@easystreet.net)
Subject: SB 1533
Email:

"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests... but a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole..." - Edmund Burke

FROM: Russell A. Dondero, Professor Emeritus, Pacific University
Dear Chair Hass and Members of the Committee,

I attended Thursday morning's hearing of SB 1533. I am dismayed at how this bill has evolved since its introduction this session. I applaud Senator Dembrow's tireless work on SB 1533 but am very disappointed in the House and Senate leadership. As an astute observer of the process told me years ago - "if the leadership wants it - it will happen."

If the amended version of SB 1533 A is what the leadership wants - this is most disappointing.

SB 1533 is unacceptable in the A-Engrossed form as are the 4 amendments.

The Orwellian language of the Dash -4 version defines "low income" as income at **80% or above MFI**. The original bill targeted those at **80% or below MFI**. This is a classic "gut and stuff" exercise.

The developer and real estate lobby has won the day thus far. If this bill passes in its current form it will be a travesty and a sad day for low-income Oregonians across the state.

What was intended to be the option of inclusionary zoning for local communities is now a thinly disguised bill for "workforce housing" in Portland while subsidizing industry while doing nothing about building below market rate housing (60% or less MFI).

This is a sham bill and should be rejected by your committee.

Why is the leadership caving into special interests? I have heard the rationale is that on the Senate side we lack 2 or 3 Democratic votes. Are there no Republicans willing to stand up for the most vulnerable Oregonians? I suspect there are based on my own experience in the Puzzle Palace.

In the McCall or Atiyeh era bi-partisanship made heavy lifting possible. I saw that first hand in 1991 when the Housing Trust Fund bill was passed by a Republican House, Democratic Senate and signed by Governor Roberts. Affordable housing should not be a partisan issue, homelessness isn't.

I think there is something wrong with this picture. Politics as usual has made the most vulnerable Oregonians invisible unless they happen to live on the streets of Portland. The "other" Oregon simply vanishes from sight in this one-dimensional narrative.

I admire the tenacity, if not always the tactics of the *Black Lives Matter* movement. What we need now is a "*Poor Lives Matter*" movement as Martin Luther King, Jr. was building before his assassination in Memphis.

Such a movement can't be built inside this building. The moral force of the "fierce urgency of now" can only come outside the legislative process. More and more Americans feel they are "outsiders" looking in. I understand and embrace their moral outrage!

A developer testified in your hearing that inclusionary zoning did not work in Massachusetts. I checked Wikipedia and the evidence contradicts this unsubstantiated claim. While IZ has not been without its problems in the Bay State, it has produced results which we in Oregon would love to see and it survived a state wide vote to overturn the law in 2010.

[Inclusionary zoning - Wikipedia](#)

"...Over the last decade [2001-2011], the Affordable Housing Law [LZ law] has been directly responsible for approximately 80% of the affordable housing built in Massachusetts outside the major cities. More than 58,000 homes have been created for working families, seniors, and people with disabilities all across the state because of this law. Nearly half of all of the units were created by non-profits, like Habitat for Humanity.^[7]..."

I've attached separate websites, one an Oregon site which offers a similar perspective plus a Rand Corporation study of IZ:

[Inclusionary Zoning in Oregon | Housing Land...](#)
[Is Inclusionary Zoning Inclusionary? A Guide for...](#)

But I don't want to get into a food fight over sources. One can find on the net evidence to support any bias. But that doesn't give one a monopoly of the facts. It simply requires us to dig down to find the truth.

Inclusionary zoning is one tool not a one size fits all solution to address the evil of housing segregation, the evil of gentrification, the evil of poverty, the evil of homelessness and the evil of not having a home of one's own.

All the smokescreens opponents of inclusionary zoning throw up can't erase the reality of these evils. The pre-emption has not solved this problem, neither has the market. While the ban on IZ did not cause our foreclosure crisis, it didn't help us dig out of the hole of the Great Recession. .

Good decisions depend on accurate information. Too often in the debate over inclusionary zoning disinformation and disingenuous arguments are used to derail a fair and balanced IZ bill.

Opponents have made it clear from the beginning that they don't support HB 1533 in its original form by citing the complexity of the issue to disguise the pursuit of client self-interest. We all know a lobbyist's job is to serve their client's interests not the public good. It's only in the give and take of the legislative process that the "good" can be discerned.

Sadly as the debate over SB 1533 has gone on any chance of the "good" being discovered has been eviscerated by a mobilization of bias and obfuscation tilted to one side of the debate - home builders and real estate interests.

When you walk into this capitol building these words of admonition are inscribed in the rotunda:

"In the souls of its citizens will be found the likeness of the state which if they be unjust and tyrannical then it will reflect their vices but if they be lovers of righteousness, confident in their liberties so will it be clear in justice, bold in freedom..."

It's time to seek justice.

PS: I've attached documents on the housing crisis in Washington County...