

Catholic Community Services Foundation

February 22, 2016

Chair Sara Gelser
Vice-Chair Alan Olsen
Senate Human Services and
Early Childhood Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee:

As the executive director of Catholic Community Services of the Mid-Willamette Valley and of Catholic Community Services Foundation I ask for your support of HB 4081A. Catholic Community Services is a nationally accredited, faith based, social service organization that serves more than 2,000 children, adults, and families facing adversity every day. Catholic Community Services Foundation, among other things, provides affordable housing for more than 1,000 low income children and adults every day.

We believe affordable housing is the foundation for promoting the positive development of children and adults, strengthening families, and building a more vibrant community. We are concerned about the current availability of affordable housing - look anywhere you want in Oregon and you will find there simply is not enough affordable housing.

Today much attention is rightfully being focused on increasing the amount of affordable housing but it is just as important to preserve the affordable housing we already have. HB 4081A provides a cost neutral way to do just that.

In a report published by Meyer Memorial Trust in 2015 entitled “The Cost of Affordable Housing Development in Oregon” the authors say, “*Subsidized affordable housing differs from market rate development in fundamental ways that tend to add cost. Affordable housing is a specific and unusual niche in real estate development premised on the basic fact that the tenants can’t pay the full cost of their housing. Long term affordability ... drives a housing model fundamentally dependent on public subsidies.*”

Property tax exemption has always been one of the most important public subsidies for affordable housing. Without it I believe much of our current affordable housing stock will quickly deteriorate and eventually be lost altogether. I, therefore, urge you to support HB 4081A.

Respectfully,

James T. Seymour

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