

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice Chairs Stark and Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Angie Garcia. I am a Mexican American, a school worker, a single mom to two beautiful children, a property owner and an entrepreneur living in Portland Oregon.

My family, decedents of migrants, came to Oregon when my grandfather brought his young family to the Woodburn/Gervais area from a small Texas town just south of El Paso. He was offered a job as a foreman by a local farmer. I am grateful that, at this time in our history families could afford to be poor. Housing was within the reach of even the lowest paying of jobs. My grandmother was even able to save a very meager amount of money and buy their first home.

As a social worker, having worked in the field of domestic violence, I know first hand how challenging it can be for victims leaving an abusive relationship. Often, due to a shortage in affordable housing, women have to face the hard decision between leaving an abusive relationship or facing homelessness.

As the owner of preschool located across the street from a dining hall, our nearest neighbors live in tents and lean-tuos. I remember the day when I was notified that we had a family living in a tent by our preschool. A five year old and his parents living in a tent on our same block. I knew this was an opportunity. This family had a housing voucher, yet no one would rent to them. Most advocates know that once someone loses their housing, it is extremely challenging to become house again. Having an ADU on my property, I cleared the calendar, and offered the little cottage to this family for three months. The expression on their face, the relief knowing they would have a warm place to sleep for the foreseeable future, is one I won't likely ever forget. In that time I worked with their caseworker, hoping that this would be a positive experience for everyone and they would walk away with a favorable housing reference. Just when I wasn't sure they would be offered housing, I received the call and was able to be a reference for this family. And I am happy to report when I checked in a few months ago they were still in their house.

We all have choices to make. Sometimes it can't be about money. For when my neighbors are living on the streets this impacts me, it impacts all of us. We can't stand by and let money be more important than the well being of families within our communities. As a Mexican American, social worker, single mom, a property owner and an entrepreneur I support HB 2004.