

Oregon Center for Christian Voices

March 2, 2017

HB 2004 Testimony of Karen Nettler to House Human Services and Housing Committee

Chair Alissa Keny-Guyer and members of the committee;

My name is Karen Nettler, I am the board chair of Oregon Center for Christian Voices (OCCV), a faith-based organization advocating for public policies and laws that reflect God's desire for a government structure fostering the well-being of all, and particularly the marginalized in our society. We believe that in a just society where there is a commitment to the well-being of all, policies must be measured by the impact on those most at risk, that the good of those with the most power and influence must not come at the expense of those most in need.

Safe and affordable housing is a fundamental need, without which the health, safety and security of families is profoundly at risk. That so many in our communities are without such housing, most for reasons beyond their control, is clearly a violation of what is acceptable in a healthy society. The lack of stable housing creates stress on families that affects their ability to function at work, in school and in the community.

As Matthew Desmond, the author of the book Evicted says, "Home is the center of life. It's the wellspring of personhood. It's where we say we're ourselves...Home is where children find safety and security, where we find our identities, where citizenship starts. It usually starts with believing you're part of a community, and that is essential to having a stable home. This is why without stable shelter, everything else falls apart." The prophetic teachings in the Hebrew scriptures insist on systems that favor neither the rich or the poor, and that assure that every person and family has access to the resources that allow them live in dignity and safety.

HB 2004 will provide ways to protect families at risk of losing their homes, giving them the dignity and safety they deserve. Whatever our faith, or none, as legislators and citizens, we must not stand by and watch while everything falls apart for families who are without stable shelter. OCCV respectfully urges this committee to come alongside those families by supporting HB 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

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