



Date: March 2, 2017

To: House Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Emily McLain, Government Relations Oregon Education Association

Re: Support for HB 2004

The Oregon Education Association represents over 44,000 members across the state of Oregon. Our members are educators working in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 public schools and community colleges. OEA's membership includes licensed teachers and specialists, classified/education support professionals (ESPs), community college faculty, retired educators, and student members.

OEA supports HB 2004 because far too many Oregon families are experiencing extreme rent increases and no cause evictions. Unstable housing can lead to a variety of issues that impact student academic success. Research indicates direct links between student homelessness and housing instability with negative educational outcomes. A lack of stable housing can lead to chronic absenteeism, frequent changes in schools, lower test scores, slower grade progression and finally it can lead to a student being more likely to drop out of school.¹

Members of the Oregon Education Association experience the repercussions of housing instability first hand every single day. Here are a few examples that our members have shared with us in just the last month.

- Margarete Moore a first-grade teacher in Medford from House District 6 she says she has first graders in her class in temporary housing situations and she says "I try to take these little ones from flight, fright, or freeze, and I help them get into learning mode."
- Rachel Wilczewski at Gresham-Barlow in house district 52 says she has students facing food insecurity and homelessness but she and her speech team work to make sure everyone can participate even though its really challenging.
- Phil Clark in HD 20 in Salem works in the teen parent program where he says the slightest change in rent can cause major stress and also lead to dropouts.
- Judy Christensen an Educational Assistant in Grants Pass from House District 3 says that in a high poverty area economic issues can be seriously disruptive and she explains that for students experiencing homelessness and unstable housing that has turned into serious behavioral problems in the classroom.
- Brinda Narayan-Wold an elementary school counselor in Eugene from house district 13 supports over 360 students and their families and she says "When children are hungry, scared or struggling with adverse circumstances they cannot give their best to learning math, reading, or writing."

¹ Homelessness and Housing Instability: The Impact on Education Outcomes A Brief for the Tacoma Housing Authority

https://tacomahousing.net/sites/default/files/print_pdf/Education/Urban%20Institute%20THA%20Homelessness%20and%20Education%202014-12-22.pdf

HB 2004 is a good first step in addressing a major housing crisis in Oregon. This legislation takes a reasonable step forward in restoring local ability to set rent stabilization that makes sense in each community. Moreover, this legislation gives some sense of security and community action for Oregon families at a time when they are experiencing extreme instability.

We urge you to support HB 2004.