

Thank you for allowing me to speak last night 3/2/17 on behalf of HB 2004, I was unable to finish my testimony due to the time limits and my own nervousness speaking to the group. Please see below for my full testimony. Thank you and have a great weekend!

I'm Celeste Goulding a social worker currently employed as the Washington County Lead Outreach Specialist for Luke-Dorf a mental health focused non-profit. A little about me, an Oregon native I lived and worked in Washington state for 5 years. While earning my Master's degree in Seattle I moved 3 times in 18 months to avoid rising cost of housing, coming back to Oregon post-graduation to be near family as well as chase the possibility of getting ahead of the housing crisis here in Oregon. I landed in Forest Grove OR working for the Severe Weather Shelters and Pacific University. I was there one month staying in an old friends farm house, which he'd been renting for 6 years, three days after I requested to be on his lease we received a no-cause termination notice addressing us both. I was able to find an apartment with a friend moving down from Seattle, both of us being young professionals with full time employment and no rental barriers. He is on a fixed income and has a criminal history; he has lived the last year in a RV on a farm property. This story is personal to me; I have countless others from my professional life I could share. The stress of families and individuals experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness is causing our other systems to be overwhelmed. The costs of emergency mental health and medical treatment are far higher than those of long-term preventative care and counseling. Agencies such as Luke-Dorf that do provide some housing are feeling the stress of a overtaxed social service system, one which prior to the housing crisis was not seeing such high numbers of folks meeting the HUD homeless definition but only because of

a lack of affordable or low-income housing. Depending on the city in Washington County we're looking at a 1-3% rental vacancy rate and little to no incentive on landlords to rent to folks with barriers such as poor credit or criminal history. We know that prevention is the best means of avoiding crisis. The way to prevent homelessness is to support the provision of affordable and low-income housing as well as measures to ensure folks stay housed. Please support house bill 2004 and support renters rights, affordable housing, and recognize the housing emergency that we are in. Thank you for your time and efforts.

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