



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 6, 2017

To: Human Services and Housing Committee
Representative Alyssa Keny-Guyer, Chair

Re: [HB 2006](#) – Mortgage Interest Deduction Reform – **Support**

The League believes the state's tax system should be equitable and flexible enough to adjust to social and economic changes. Furthermore, state and local tax structures should be examined and revised to benefit communities that provide housing for lower-income families.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports HB 2006, legislation that would rebalance the mortgage interest deduction so that it supports more Oregonians in need of safe and stable housing. The mortgage interest deduction currently is structured in a way that overwhelmingly benefits the wealthiest Oregonians. The current deduction provides over \$1 billion in tax relief, but a substantial portion subsidizes households in the top 40 percent. At the same time, communities throughout Oregon are experiencing a housing crisis.

As a state, we need to evaluate carefully every available housing subsidy in order to ensure that we are doing all we can to meet the overwhelming need. When so many families and individuals have no place to live, the time is right to redirect some of the resources from the deduction to those with the greatest need. By modifying the deduction, resources can be redirected to the development of affordable rental homes, supportive services to prevent homelessness, and affordable homeownership.

The League is particularly concerned about our most vulnerable community members and supports spending a portion of the savings on rental housing for extremely low-income households and homelessness prevention. One of the biggest challenges we face in Oregon is the lack of housing affordable to extremely low-income households. Directing the savings from mortgage income deduction reform to families most in need, along with other investments in low-income housing, is the most effective way to address our housing crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Debbie Aiona in black ink.

Debbie Aiona
LWVOR Housing Portfolio