



McMinnville Area

Habitat for Humanity®

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March 8, 2017

Members of the Human Services & Housing Committee
Oregon Legislature
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97310

Re: HB 2570

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chair Olson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing regarding HB 2570, which would establish an Affordable Homeownership Grant Program for nonprofit organizations to provide opportunities for homeownership to persons in low income households. As the Executive Director of the McMinnville Area Habitat for Humanity (MacHabitat), I strongly support HB 2570.

Since 1991, MacHabitat has been building homes, community, and hope in McMinnville, Amity, Carlton, Lafayette, Sheridan, Willamina, and Yamhill. Just last Saturday, March 4, we dedicated the Garcia Family home, the 55th for our affiliate and the seventh home in our Aspire Community Development, which will provide homes for 34 families. We will complete two more homes by the end of the summer and hope to pour three foundations in July for homes for families yet to be selected. We currently have a list of 70 families awaiting the opening of our application period in May; we anticipate many more will apply once we begin soliciting for applications.

The benefits of homeownership for low income families are clear and well documented; breaking the cycle of poverty is the most important. I have attached a letter from our most recent Women Build homeowner. Traci and her three children escaped an abusive situation and had been bouncing from place to place for years, relying on family or friends. She gained strength and confidence while building her home and taking the required Habitat homeowner classes. She and her children now belong somewhere; they have a safe, decent home to call their own; she is a contributing member of the community, paying her mortgage and property taxes, helping her neighbors.

HB 2570 will support the development of new affordable homeownership options across Oregon for people like Traci. For Habitat for Humanity affiliates statewide, it may make it possible to double our homebuilding capacity.

I ask you to support HB 2570 because everyone deserves a safe, stable, affordable place to call home. Should you have any questions, please contact me at mary@machabitat.org or 503-687-1411.

Thank you for all you do for the State of Oregon!

Sincerely,

Mary P. Stern

I first learned of Habitat from a friend who handed me an application and said to go apply. Little did I know it was to be the best decision of my life. Having little knowledge and more than a few misconceptions of what Habitat was all about, I had a lot to learn. The more I learned, the prouder I became to be a part of such a great project. As we the applicants worked with the staff in meetings and classes, everything became more exciting and clear. This was real. A whole neighborhood built by amazing volunteers and the people who live there. My children and I were going to have a house of our own, we would never have to move again or wonder where we would go once we outstayed our welcome. We belonged somewhere. Construction began July of 2015 and we moved in July 16th 2016. It was a long year full of hard work, a real education and sometimes difficult anticipation. All completely worth it! My kids each have their own room, ages 10, 8 6. Something that they had never before been able to experience. One of the first things they did while even the boxes were still packed was to write up little signs stuck to their doors that said, "Please ask before coming in my room". They had their own little spaces and couldn't be more happy about it. I truly hope that more families can experience what we have been able to accomplish with our house and ourselves. Habitat is life changing and an amazing opportunity.

Thank you all

-Traci (Homeowner)