

April 26, 2017

To: House Revenue Committee

Dear Chair Barnhart, Vice-Chair Bentz, Vice-Chair Smith Warner and Members of the Committee House Revenue Committee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer, and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. I am writing to share our organization's strong support for HB 3357.

With each home that Habitat for Humanity builds and sells (current statewide production is 150 homes per biennium), we pay the document recording fee at closing. Even though only a small portion of the HOAP fund goes toward homeownership, we will gladly pay the increased fee—as we believe it is a critical investment in a broad array of affordable housing solutions. These solutions are needed now more than ever to address our statewide housing crisis. We are also in favor of the county clerks receiving a reasonable fee for facilitating this important program.

Habitat for Humanity helps families achieve stability by building and selling them a key asset: their home. Habitat homeowners pay down an average of \$50,000 in mortgage principal during the first 10 years of ownership, facilitating the very real intergenerational transfer of wealth. We have a proven track record of helping to close our state's minority homeownership gap. Over 10% of the households we serve have at least one member with a permanent disability. The average median income of Habitat homebuyers statewide is 39%. That's \$22,000 in annual earnings for a family of four. Thanks to Habitat's diligent homebuyer selection process and thorough financial education, our mortgage repayment rate exceeds 98%.

This fall, Habitat for Humanity of Oregon conducted a statewide homeowner impact study that highlights the educational benefits experienced by the children living in Habitat homes:

- 63% of the children we serve received better grades after moving into their Habitat home.
- 92% of the children raised in Habitat homes graduated from high school, exceeding Oregon's high school graduation rate by 17%.

The children of Habitat homeowners also experience improved health outcomes, receive higher adult earnings and are far more likely to become homeowners themselves.

Habitat for Humanity homeowners achieve the strength, stability and independence they need to build a better life for themselves and their families. Statewide, Habitat homeowners pay an estimated \$1.32 million in property taxes each year, supporting local schools and infrastructure—and enhancing the communities we all share.

Even as we celebrate these successes, we are committed to doing more to address our state's housing crisis. Our communities become stronger as we unite to meet our friends' and neighbors' basic needs for a place to call home.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of HB 3357. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon and the 30 Habitat for Humanity offices building and repairing homes statewide, thank you for your service.

Respectfully,

Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director