



To: Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee

From: Steve Messinetti, CEO, Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East

RE: HB3175 Endorsement

Date: 4/27/2017

Dear Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee:

HFH Portland/Metro East has built more than 375 homes in Portland and Gresham over the past 36 years, and have seen the impact that homeownership can have on the lives of families with low incomes.

In fact, last year we surveyed our first 300 homebuyers to find out how their lives have changes since moving into their Habitat home:

- Parents report their kids doing better in school. 83% of children raised in a Habitat home graduate, 20% higher than the rate for Multnomah County
- 79% of families who were experiencing housing related respiratory illness no longer have symptoms after moving in
- Use of government subsidies like SNAP dropped significantly within the first 5 years of ownership

With the record level increases in rents and price of homes, underserved population are especially vulnerable. Just this year we had over 700 households come to us for help. But we are proud that of the 32 families we sold homes to this year:

- 90% Were families of color
- 43% were single parent households
- 30% had family members with disabilities

National research has shown us that the benefits from homeownership come from having a stable home, an affordable house payment, and a built in saving plan, which is why our affiliate has made the commitment going forward for all our homes to be permanently affordable. The land trust model ensures that families can stay in their gentrifying neighborhoods and that their homes will be affordable to low income families when they sell in the future as well.

LIFT funds for homeownership would significantly expand our ability to serve more families and help close the minority homeownership gap, because our greatest barrier to do more is our ability to buy land. We have the donors and volunteers lined up to build houses, and families lined up to buy them, if we can take the land out of the equation we can do more immediately.

Every unit of affordable homeownership we build will create two units of housing. The rental unit the family moves out of and the ownership unit the family moves into. Let's get the homeowner ready families out of our rental units and move them up into ownership and financial independence.

I urge you to support HB 3175 and dedicate \$20 million LIFT toward helping 500 households earning between 30% and 80% of the area median income to buy their first home. **It's prudent, it's equitable and it's efficient.**

Thank you,
Steve Messinetti
CEO
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East