

**Kate Brown**  
**Governor**



**Oregon Commission on Black Affairs**  
"Advocating Equality and Diversity"  
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Testimony in Support of HB 2004A  
May 3, 2017, 1 pm, HR D  
Senate Committee on Human Services

Chair Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen, and Senators Dembrow, Knopp, and Monnes Anderson:

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) is urging approval of HB 2004A which will buffer renters from the devastating effects of no cause evictions to entire families, while working towards solutions to stabilize the rising rental costs in Oregon.

Oregon needs state wide policy to support renters that will improve the health and economic conditions our African American and Black populations. Home ownership is one of the leading health indicators for children, growing and prospering in their early years. In addition, stable homes and a stable rental market directly impacts individuals' and the community's health. Policy initiatives that stabilize the rental market and ease stress on families faced with sudden eviction and unplanned, associated costs will improve Oregonians' health and the overall prosperity of our state's economy.

The *2015 State of Black Oregon* report highlights that upward mobility for Americans living in poverty is a nearly impossible ladder to climb, with people born in the lowest 20% of the economy remaining there for the rest of their lives. The median net worth of African American and Black households is down 43% since 2007 to \$11,000. Renting should not determine someone's socio economic status for a lifetime, it should be a pathway to developing individual and community wealth and resilience. To break these cycles of poverty, we need smart policy solutions like those proposed in HB 2004A.

Oregon's African American and Black community has been sounding the alarm of a housing crisis for years. Gentrified out of the NE quadrant of Portland has created instability that results in poor health outcomes for these populations. Studies conducted by health systems like Family Care and Health Share and the state's other CCOs show that barriers to stable housing contributes to poor health for individuals and is reflected their health plans. Regional and countywide community health needs assessments are reaching similar conclusions about the need for stable housing.

The OCBA supports the goals of HB 2004A to reduce and buffer the effects of no cause evictions and stabilize the rental markets in Oregon. We urge your positive consideration of HB 2004A.

Sincerely,

OCBA Commissioner Mariotta Gary-Smith

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