

Testimony in Support
HB 2004A
Senate Human Services Committee, May 3, 2017

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Neighborhood Partnerships Board of Directors, I would like to express our enthusiastic support of HB 2004A. Oregon communities need strong and decisive action this session in order to ensure that our neighbors, friends, families, employees, and children all have safe, stable, and affordable places to call home. HB 2004A would provide the 4 in 10 Oregonians who live in rented homes some stability and predictability as well as protection from retaliation when needed repairs are requested.

Our communities cannot achieve any of our common goals to build a better Oregon if the foundation of opportunity continues to crumble and erode. I'm sure you have each heard dozens of stories during testimony on this bill, in your districts as you met with your constituents, and at community meetings. Heartbreaking stories of families uprooted and thrown into chaos, or enduring unlivable conditions because a retaliatory eviction would be worse.

In addition to these human costs, there are other costs to families and our communities. We know that the displacement and dislocation of eviction or moves because of rent increases brings a cascade of additional costs. Direct costs of security deposits, application fees, first and last months' rent, and the actual move. Indirect costs as family expenses are foregone, so children may miss activities or opportunities, or meals. Furniture that can't be moved, or that doesn't survive a move. Workdays lost looking for housing, or moving. Educational progress lost because of worrying, because of changes in schools, because of the disruption of being without a home.

HB 2004A is a balanced approach that will bring needed stability back to our rental marketplace. The bill saw significant amendments in the House in an effort to meet tenants' needs and landlord concerns. It is a vital and important step, and powerful statement about the Oregon we want to be. We know that it is not enough. Neighborhood Partnerships will continue our strong support of state and local investments and policies that will expand housing opportunity. We need a robust policy toolkit and significant investment to move us forward. And we need HB 2004A.

Thank you for your service to Oregon, and for your action to protect Oregon communities with passage of HB 2004A.

Sincerely,



Janet Byrd
Executive Director