



Testimony for Public Hearing
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
May 22, 2017

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HB 2737 A - Relating to construction standards for small homes; prescribing an effective date.

Good afternoon, Members of the Committee. My name is Robin Quirke. I am testifying on behalf of the Eugene and Springfield branch (Unit 1119) of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. The NAACP believes that housing is a human right, and that it is the community's responsibility to support each other by reducing homelessness. Because HB 2737 would increase the number of houses for those without shelter by making the process of building small homes (tiny houses) more affordable, along with reducing building code impediments, the NAACP endorses this bill and urges the Members of the Business and Transportation Committee to vote in favor of moving it to the Senate floor.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reported in 2016¹:

- Oregon is considered to have one of the highest rates of unsheltered individuals in the United States.
- On a single night in 2016, "California, Florida, and Oregon together accounted for more than half of all unsheltered people in families with children" in the U.S.
- In Oregon, 75.8% of homeless people in families with children were unsheltered (that's 2,281 family members, including their children).

¹ <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

The Oregon Department of Education reported in 2016²:

- “For the third year in a row, Oregon’s population of homeless students is up over the previous year, reaching a level now exceeding that seen during the recession.”
- In Oregon, “21,340 students, or 3.7% of the public school K-12 population, ‘lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence’ as defined by the federal government. Another 1,929 children in Pre-K programs also fall under this definition.”

I respectfully ask this Senate Committee to think about what it would be like if as of tonight you and your family did not have a “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” I think most people would agree that if there is a way to get more houses built, homes that are clean and affordable, for people who are unsheltered, we, as a community, need to do all we can to make that happen. The fact that HB 2737 aligns with federal regulations, which have been thoroughly vetted, makes passing this bill a safe bet.

As someone who spent just three weeks without shelter in an urban environment, I want the committee to understand the challenge to stay warm, clean, and healthy makes each day and night seem very long. Time is of the essence; let’s not allow outdated Oregon building codes to be a setback in providing people, your constituents, shelter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Quirke

Member of NAACP Legal Redress Committee (Unit 1119)