



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2724

June 29, 2017

Dear Co-Chair Johnson, Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the subcommittee,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support of House Bill 2724.

The Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than 80 organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the base on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices from residents to local jurisdictions to non-profit housing developers and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

Today across Oregon, families and individuals who rent their homes are struggling with low vacancy rates and extreme competition for rental units. For tenants with barriers to renting an apartment, such as a history of poor credit, evictions, or criminal convictions, they may find it next to impossible to find a safe, decent, and affordable place to rent.

One solution that addresses these barriers is renter education programs. Renter education programs are offered in counties throughout Oregon, both rural and urban. These programs equip participants with the knowledge they need to be successful renters by educating them on their rights and responsibilities, as well as skills such as communicating with their landlord. By building their skills and knowledge as renters, these programs build stronger, more successful relationships between landlords and tenants. And for tenants with barriers to renting, such as a poor credit or rental history, the completion of a renter education helps give them a second chance.

The rental assurance fund for tenants proposed in HB 2724 will amplify the power of these programs. Landlords who rent to program graduates know they are renting to a tenant who has completed a tenant education curriculum. With the fund, they also have the assurance that if any challenges do arise and their unit is damaged or if the rent is not paid, they will receive compensation for their expenses. In Oregon's extremely competitive rental markets, a rental

assurance fund can increase housing opportunities for tenants with barriers to housing.

On behalf of the Housing Alliance, I urge your support of HB 2724, which will support renter education program graduates throughout Oregon to secure housing and remain successfully housed.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Lee', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Jenny Lee

On behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

## *Housing Alliance Members*

*1000 Friends  
211info  
A Community Together (Lane County)  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton County Health Department  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
CASA of Oregon  
Central City Concern  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Eugene  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Portland  
City of Tigard  
Clackamas County  
Coalition of Community Health Clinics  
Coalition of Housing Advocates  
Common Ground OR-WA  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Community Alliance of Tenants  
Community Energy Project  
Community Housing Fund  
Community Partners for Affordable Housing  
Community Vision  
Cornerstone Community Housing  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Fair Housing Council of Oregon  
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.  
FOOD for Lane County  
Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln County  
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon  
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East  
Hacienda CDC  
Housing Authority of Clackamas County  
Housing Development Center  
Human Solutions  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Impact Northwest*

*JOIN  
Lane County Health and Human Services  
League of Women Voters of Oregon  
Lincoln County  
Mainstream Housing, Inc.  
Metro  
Momentum Alliance  
NAYA Family Center  
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.  
Neighborhood Partnerships  
NeighborImpact  
NeighborWorks Umpqua  
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing  
Nightingale Public Advocacy Project  
Northwest Housing Alternatives  
Northwest Pilot Project  
Oregon AFSCME Council 75  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Oregon Housing Authorities  
Oregon Opportunity Network  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
Portland Homeless Family Solutions  
Proud Ground  
Raphael House  
REACH CDC  
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.  
ShelterCare  
Sisters Habitat for Humanity  
Sponsors, Inc.  
SquareOne Villages  
Street Roots  
Transition Projects  
Urban League of Portland  
Washington County  
Welcome Home Coalition  
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services*