



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 6, 2018

House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Keny Guyer, Vice Chair Olson, and Vice Chair Sanchez:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support for HJR 201.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than eighty organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation 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 including residents, local jurisdictions, non-profit housing developers, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. During the last school year, over 22,500 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness.

We have many tools at our disposal to address our affordable housing crisis, and HJR 201 seeks to add one more tool – additional flexibility for bonds issued by local jurisdictions for the purposes of building more affordable places to call home.

Today, local jurisdictions can issue bonds for affordable housing – in 2016, voters in the City of Portland approved a historic \$258 million bond for affordable homes. However, our constitution limits how these bonds can be used. Article XI Section 9 prohibits the lending of credit of local jurisdictions for the benefit of a private party, and as a result, this has meant that any jurisdiction issuing bonds for affordable housing must both own and control the housing built with the bonds, and may not blend other funding sources with the bond dollars.

As you know, the vast majority of affordable housing today is built with multiple funding sources – federal tax credits, state bond dollars, document recording fee, and other resources. With additional flexibility, any local jurisdiction considering asking voters to approve bonds could build substantially more affordable housing by leveraging federal tax credits and private investors. Perhaps more importantly, smaller local jurisdictions without dedicated housing staff

could also consider a bond as a potential way to develop more needed homes in their community.


HJR 201 would refer to voters an exemption to the lending of credit prohibition specifically for affordable housing. Any future local measure passed by voters would have to approve the amount of the bonds, and approve the income range of people who would live in the housing built with the bonds.

Our local, state, and federal governments must all work together to solve our housing crisis, and to create more affordable homes. HJR 201 is a modest change to the Oregon Constitution that would address a pressing, statewide problem.

We urge your support for HJR 201. It is time to ask voters to create an exemption for affordable housing, and allow local jurisdictions the flexibility needed to build more affordable homes in their communities.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh  
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

## Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon  
211info  
A Community Together (Lane County)  
Aging in the Gorge  
Benton County Health Department  
Benton Habitat for Humanity  
Bienestar  
Bradley Angle  
BRIDGE Housing  
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  
Evolve Property Management  
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  
Housing Oregon  
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  
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority  
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 Christian Voices  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Oregon Food Bank  
Oregon Housing Authorities  
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives  
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