



**Testimony Supporting HB 4006
House Human Services and Housing Committee
February 8th, 2018**

Chair Keny Guyer, Vice-Chair Olson, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) in support of HB 4006-6, which would support efforts to address the extreme rent burdens afflicting tenants in cities across our state.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. One of the most important issues in the lives of our clients across the state is the challenge to find and maintain safe, stable, affordable housing. Housing is about much more than a roof over one's head; it is about opportunity, stability, and health. Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible for families to hold down a job, keep children in school, access neighborhood amenities, and stay healthy.

Oregon has seen significant population growth in recent years.¹ Every single county in Oregon saw population growth in 2017.² However, housing production has lagged far behind this growth for the last decade. In more and more communities across the state, both urban and rural, vacancy rates are between 1% and 3%. There are only 22 units of affordable housing available for every 100 low-income renters looking for housing. More than 22,000 Oregon students experienced homelessness last year. These numbers are getting worse.

All of these factors have led to high rents across the state, and extreme rent burdens for Oregon families. One in four renters in our state is paying more than 50 percent of income in rent. When tenants pay more than half their income towards rent, they do not have enough money left over to support themselves and their families.

HB 4006-6 provides that cities of over 10,000 residents with more than 25% of renters with a severe rent burden will submit information about local housing affordability to the Oregon Department of Housing and Human Services. This will allow the state to monitor the extent of our housing crisis. In addition, the bill allocates \$2 million from the General Fund to the Department of Land Conservation and Development to provide technical assistance to cities hoping to address affordability issues. These are creative ideas that will help Oregon respond to the crisis it is facing.

For these reasons, we urge support of HB 4006. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ <http://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/ISD/RA/2017-Point-in-Time-Estimates-Homelessness-Oregon.pdf>

² <https://oregoneconomicanalysis.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/popreg17.png>