

Representative Julie Fahey

900 Court St. NE, H-474
Salem, OR 97301

February 7, 2018

RE: Racially restrictive covenants

Dear Representative Fahey,

It has been almost a year since my arrival to Portland to take the helm at Hacienda CDC. In that time I have had the pleasure to learn about many wonderful attributes of Oregon and Oregonians; I am particularly struck by the progressive attitudes and inclusive approach to welcoming new residents from all corners of the globe.

In light of the values I have experienced in this community, I was surprised to find out that many real property deeds continue to contain Racially Restrictive Covenants. Historically, these covenants prohibited property from being sold or rented to people of specific races. The Federal Housing Administration encouraged the wide use of these racially restrictive covenants, justifying them as necessary to retain and increase property values.

Although these covenants were made illegal by the passage of the Housing Rights Act and are no longer enforceable, they do represent racist values of the past that are incompatible with the Oregon we know and love today. I recognize that removing this language during real estate transactions may add a layer of difficulty and expense to the process. However, the bill sponsored by Rep. Julie Fahey, Rep. Meek and Sen. Frederick outlines a streamlined process whereby homeowners can remove this language from their deeds:

"The new process under LC 190 streamlines the process by allowing homeowners to notify interested parties via certified mail, rather than having to provide expensive personal service under the standard procedure.

To ensure that the proper people are still notified, homeowners wishing to remove the language are required to submit a sworn affidavit ensuring that they made a good faith effort to notify all interested parties." (*LC 190: Removing Racially Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds*).

These racist covenants are a visceral reminder of a history of racial injustice, neighborhood segregation, and lack of investment in communities of color, the painful effects of which continue to be felt in these communities to this day. I strongly support the passage of this bill, and I encourage all legislators from both parties to vote for its passage so that we may help Oregonians move beyond a past that does not reflect the values we currently hold as a community.

Sincerely,



Ernesto Fonseca, CEO
Hacienda CDC

