



House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
Re: HB 4010, Racial disparities in homeownership task force

February 8, 2018

Chair Keny-Guyer and fellow committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in strong support of House Bill 4010, which would establish a task force to address racial disparities in homeownership. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, a coalition of 19 culturally-specific organizations dedicated to cross-cultural, collective action for racial equity. The Coalition of Communities of Color's mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

A stable home to call one's own is a widely-shared aspiration—one that communities of color face substantial disparities in achieving. Despite sharing this dream of homeownership, communities of color have historically experienced historically faced legal discrimination in home purchasing and currently face socioeconomic disparities that reduce their chances for homeownership, including lower incomes that result in fewer savings, reduced access to and less favorable terms for mortgages, and persistent housing discrimination. The racial disparities resulting from these inequities means that white households are 1.4 times as likely to own a home as are households of color. Fewer than one out of three black families own a home—and white households are more than twice as likely to own a home.

In addition to stability in housing, homeownership is the primary source of wealth for US families, and differences in homeownership rates are the primary driver of the racial wealth gap, resulting in long-term socioeconomic impacts that span generations. Research also suggests that homeownership also has positive impacts on educational achievement and financial stability.

Addressing the homeownership gap is a major priority of many Coalition members. It is imperative that we have a fuller understanding of the barriers to homeownership here in Oregon so we can ensure everyone has a chance at fulfilling their goal of homeownership. Understanding and addressing the racial homeownership gap through a task force presents an opportunity to identify these barriers and propose solutions.

We also support an amendment to ensure that one of the community representatives be from a culturally specific organization with experience serving communities of color who face these barriers. The inclusion of a homeownership program provider will provide critical expertise due to their systemic understanding of the experiences of prospective homebuyers and how to overcome them.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I respectfully urge you to support this task force to analyze the barriers to homeownership impacting Oregon's communities of color and identify solutions that enable communities of color to create opportunity for their families through homeownership.

Thank you,  
Jenny Lee  
On Behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color

