

Testimony to Oregon House Committee on Human Services and Housing FOR HB 4007

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The nature of this bill is pretty much a “slam-dunk”. I would, however, agree with the suggestions made by Tax Fairness Oregon in their handout: “Concerns about technical flaws in HB4007”.

I could review the points brought up by so many representatives of housing organizations but you have enough to read and I have one main addition to add to your deliberations - the perspective of someone who has benefitted from a program that, although not exactly the same in nature, did provide benefits to first-time homeowners.

I was 53 when I was finally able to purchase a home in 2003 because of the development of an affordable housing complex in St Johns [North Portland]. The program I qualified for provided closing costs and a 10-year property tax abatement on the house.

I cannot begin to tell you how that purchase changed my life for the better. Also, my involvement in the community of St Johns has contributed, in turn, to positive transportation and educational improvements there. As an educator and a librarian my investment of time in these projects has far exceeded the monetary value of the benefits I received from closing costs and tax abatement.

All of the housing issues - homelessness, renter vulnerability and lack of resources of potential first-time homeowners - are important. Let’s pass this bill, which will result in so many benefits with so little investment.

Thank you.

Donna L Cohen

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