



**Oregon  
Law Center**  
WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS

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**Testimony Supporting HJR 210  
Senate Human Services Committee  
February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

Chair Gelser, Vice-Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC) in support of HJR 201, which proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution to allow municipalities to finance the capitol costs of affordable housing construction through the use of bonds. This amendment would be referred to the Oregon voters for approval.

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's communities and local governments need all tools at their disposal to help address the housing crisis. Currently, Article XI, Section 9 of the Oregon Constitution prohibits local governments from using bond funding to finance housing construction unless an ownership interest is retained in the housing. This current restriction makes it difficult for many local governments to use bond funding.

HJR 201 would provide greater flexibility, allowing local governments to leverage other sources of money to create more affordable housing. Passage of this measure would open up opportunities for more creative financing without requiring the local government to retain an ownership interest in housing created.

In this time of great crisis, we need federal, state and local governments to invest in housing infrastructure to ensure the stability and vitality of our communities. HJR 201 will make it easier for local governments to help. For these reasons, we urge support of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.