



HOUSING ALLIANCE

February 27, 2018

Senate Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Burdick, Vice Chair Winters, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support for HJR 201.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than eighty organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including residents, local jurisdictions, non-profit housing developers, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. Today, we simply don't have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table. During the last school year, over 22,500 of our school children in grades K – 12 experienced homelessness.

We have many tools at our disposal to address our affordable housing crisis, and HJR 201 seeks to add one more tool – additional flexibility for bonds issued by local jurisdictions for the purposes of building more affordable places to call home.

Today, local jurisdictions can issue bonds for affordable housing – in 2016, voters in the City of Portland approved a historic \$258 million bond for affordable homes. However, our constitution limits how these bonds can be used. Article XI Section 9 prohibits the lending of credit of local jurisdictions for the benefit of a private party, and as a result, this has meant that any jurisdiction issuing bonds for affordable housing must both own and control the housing built with the bonds, and may not blend other funding sources with the bond dollars.

As you know, the vast majority of affordable housing today is built with multiple funding sources – federal tax credits, state bond dollars, document recording fee, and other resources. With additional flexibility, any local jurisdiction considering asking voters to approve bonds could build substantially more affordable housing by leveraging federal tax credits and private investors. Perhaps more importantly, smaller local jurisdictions without dedicated housing staff

could also consider a bond as a potential way to develop more needed homes in their community.


HJR 201 would refer to voters an exemption to the lending of credit prohibition specifically for affordable housing. Any future local measure passed by voters would have to approve the amount of the bonds, and approve the income range of people who would live in the housing built with the bonds.

Our local, state, and federal governments must all work together to solve our housing crisis, and to create more affordable homes. HJR 201 is a modest change to the Oregon Constitution that would address a pressing, statewide problem.

We urge your support for HJR 201. It is time to ask voters to create an exemption for affordable housing, and allow local jurisdictions the flexibility needed to build more affordable homes in their communities.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
A Community Together (Lane County)
Aging in the Gorge
Benton County Health Department
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
CASA of Oregon
Central City Concern
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Hillsboro
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
Common Ground OR-WA
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Energy Project
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enterprise Community Partners
Evolve Property Management
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Lincoln County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

Impact Northwest
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
Momentum Alliance
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Economic Development Corp.
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Nightingale Public Advocacy Project
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Center for Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Housing Authorities
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Transition Projects
Urban League of Portland
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition
Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services