



Co-Chairs Roblan, Holvey, and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of Family Promise of Beaverton, we are a transitional housing program in Washington County that helps families experiencing homelessness and families that are housing insecure to find stable housing. With the outbreak of COVID-19 and the recent declaration that we are in a national State of Emergency, these are uncertain times for all of us. However, for the estimated 31.8% of Oregon working families who live in poverty, the possibility of losing their home or job compounds this uncertainty.

The effects of coronavirus will be far reaching and go beyond public health. This outbreak will undoubtedly destabilize the housing situation of countless families in our community unless we take proactive steps to mitigate this now.

The impact this outbreak will have on vulnerable families is profound. Hourly workers have already begun to see significant reduction in their paychecks and there is a very real possibility that we will begin to see layoffs. As seen in other countries, those in service and hospitality will be hit the hardest. For many of our neighbors who do not have sufficient, if any, paid sick leave, an illness for themselves or a member of their family will mean serious losses to their household income as well. Those who already live in- or are on the edge of- poverty will be hit the hardest and it is not unlikely that we will see increases in homelessness, evictions, and food insecurity.

Schools have been closed for over an extra (outside of Spring Break) month - working parents will also struggle with the issue of childcare. Many parents will be forced to make the decision between paying for childcare or taking extended unpaid leave from work. The latest figures from the Beaverton School District show that roughly 1,592 students are experiencing homelessness, meaning these closures will have a devastating effect on their way of life. That is at least 1,592 students. Come April, when rent is due, this number will see a stark increase if we do not act now.

We understand that securing public health is of the highest importance, however the economic fallout of this crisis will disproportionately impact working families. Over 150,000 Oregon families pay more than 50% of their income to housing, meaning a single unforeseen financial crisis can destabilize them, putting them at risk for homelessness. We want to make sure every precaution possible is taken to prevent this from happening to working families.

In crises such as this one, it is important that we display compassion and caring for every member of our community. While we are not able to physically come together, now is the time to show solidarity in the protection of our most vulnerable citizens. **We believe the best ways to do this are to** suspend rent, mortgages, and utility payments until this pandemic is no longer a pandemic and to provide emergency funding to shelter systems and programs in our counties. We need to take care of workers/families/low-income people, especially those that fall between the cracks of unemployment and sick



leave. We need cash assistance for people on food stamps. We need to make sure we take care of our most vulnerable as well as those most directly impacted by the virus/disease. COVID-19 will change our way of life as we take preventative steps to mitigate its impact. Don't let it change the lives of vulnerable Oregonians families forever.

Thank you for your service to our state and attention to this public health crisis.

Family Promise of Beaverton

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