



04.Feb.2019

ATTN: Senate Committee on Housing  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fagan, Vice Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Marilou Carrera and I live in Portland. I work for the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA). We are a people of color-led collaborative organized to center and uplift the wisdom of our communities of color through racial justice-informed health equity policies and practices, as part of the larger movement to shift power and dismantle White Supremacy. As one of four regional health equity coalitions, OHEA serves the tri-counties Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington. Our scope of work ensures collaboration among our partners and application of anti-racism practices and principles; establishes advocacy efforts led and driven by communities of color within a social determinants of health framework; and creates mechanisms and structures to capacitate our organizational partners to remove barriers in health equity and shift the balance of power toward communities who do not often have a voice in these conversations.

I believe everyone needs a safe and stable place to call home. We know every community in our state includes residents who struggle to make ends meet. They are often forced to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. This is not a real choice, this is health inequity writ large. Housing is a health issue and we need to help make sure everyone has a safe, stable, affordable place to call home so they can make the decisions that best support their well-being.

OHEA is committed to advancing community-recommended health equity strategies. A number of these strategies were borne of the Multnomah County Community Health Improvement Plan developed by OHEA. I think you will see these recommendations align with Stable Homes and are germane to the State's priorities, as well.

- Advocate at state level to implement Just Cause evictions, remove state pre-emption for rent stabilization policies, and landlord education through mandatory landlord licensing
- Partner with organizations to advance political education on tenants rights to those communities with greatest likelihood of becoming displaced



- Leverage successes of Rose CDC and Living Cully (in Portland, among others) and advocate to implement their successful policies and programs at the county and city levels
- Establish baseline information that identifies communities most at risk of displacement
- Identify and partner with key stakeholders to develop policies that reduce economic displacement and ensure those community members are part of the discussion from the beginning
- Advocate for healthy housing policies that are proven to have cost savings and a positive impact on health
- Advocate for housing inspection policies that address tenant health and requires staff at all levels to be culturally responsive
- Include houseless community members in decision making around data collection
- Increase affordable housing for the most underserved and needy populations, and decrease number of houseless community members through community-led and funded strategies

As they have told us time and again, housing instability places great strains on the health of our families and communities across the life spectrum. People of color, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, and low-income communities including our elders and young people are especially affected by gentrification, displacement and policies that threaten their housing health. People renting their homes are depending on the Legislature to act to provide basic protections and stability. There are a range of issues to solve the housing problems our communities are facing and passing SB 608 is a critical and important step in that process. Please vote yes on SB 608.

Thank you so much for your time in reviewing my letter and your service to our communities.

Marilou Carrera  
Community Health Equity Manager  
Oregon Health Equity Alliance