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February 14, 2019

Dear House Human Services and Housing Committee, Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Committee,

My name is Shannon Singleton and I am the Executive Director of JOIN in Portland. JOIN exists to support the efforts of homeless individuals and families to transition out of homelessness into permanent housing. Our efforts are directed at people sleeping outside or in their car in the Portland Metro area. Our service provision is not dependent on age, gender, race, ethnicity, faith, culture, language, sexual identity, specific diagnosis, or identifiable issue.

At JOIN we believe that housing is a human right and that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home. In Multnomah County, renters on fixed and minimum wage incomes struggle to pay their rent, even for a one-bedroom apartment. According to the Oregon Housing Alliance statistics from 2017, the average fixed income is between \$9,000 and \$16,000 for Oregonians. The income required to afford a one-bedroom apartment is a minimum of \$42,000 annually. Because of the lack of affordable housing, stagnant wages, and housing barriers, many are left without options and are forced into homelessness.

SB 608 will serve to add protections to prevent additional Oregonians from slipping into homelessness. Over the past three years, JOIN has seen a significant increase in the number of formerly homeless households who had been stably housed for 5-10 years, returning to ask for assistance to prevent eviction due to exorbitant rent increases or seeking help to relocate to an affordable apartment, to no avail.

People who rent their homes are depending on the Legislature to **vote yes to support SB 608** in order to provide basic protections and stability. We know we need to address a range of issues to solve the housing problems our communities are facing, and it is critical the Legislature act now to pass SB 608. Please vote yes on SB 608.

Thank you so much for the hard work you all do for our community, and thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Shannon Singleton, MSW  
Executive Director at JOIN