



March 25, 2019

To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Transportation and Economic Development

Submitted via: jwmtr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Allan Lazo. I'm the executive director of the Fair Housing Council of Oregon. We are a statewide private non-profit civil rights organization whose mission is to end housing discrimination and ensure equal access to housing opportunities in Oregon. We also are the only organization in the state whose sole mission is focused on fair housing.

Our housing affordability crisis impacts every community across our state and especially those most vulnerable among us.

Our neighbors and family members of color, those living with disabilities, new Oregonians, single-parent households. Residents in our communities who can't afford to live where they work, are afraid to exert their right to housing free from discrimination or even suitable habitation for fear of retaliation or losing housing they can barely afford.

We also must acknowledge that there is a context of historical housing discrimination, segregation, and displacement that needs to be a part of our conversation about this crisis.

Yet we know that we have not overcome what some see as a long-ago history; rather we live today with a long-lasting legacy of disparities:

Across the state, according to Housing and Community Services housing profiles, 68% of African Americans and 61% of Hispanics are renters, versus only 39% of whites; 66% of single parent households with children -- more than 70% of whom are single female headed households -- are renters.

It is reassuring that we have such great partners in Housing and Community Services and director Salazar, whose Statewide Housing Plan is leading with racial equity and recognizes that housing is not just about the roof over our heads but about the opportunity out the front door.

We know that renters in private rental housing face a range of needs. The proposal in the Governor's budget would increase access to critical services such as legal assistance, housing navigation for people seeking safety from violence and for people with Housing Choice Vouchers, increased access to fair housing training, tenant education, ready to rent classes, and innovative technology.

For our organization, one of the important strategies we deploy is educating all stakeholders about both their rights as well as their responsibilities in the housing marketplace.

Every fair housing plan developed by jurisdictions across the state identified fair housing education as one of the key barriers to fair housing in their community.

1221 SW Yamhill Street, Portland, Oregon 97205



Last year, through multiple federal, state, and local grants, our organization conducted 145 fair housing-focused trainings throughout the state, reaching more than 3,100 renters, advocates, social service agencies, shelters, jurisdictions, and, importantly, housing providers large and small, in every corner of the state.

With additional resources, we would greatly increase the number of these trainings statewide as well as provide increased access to resources needed when housing discrimination occurs, such as our statewide housing discrimination hotline.

Thank you again for the opportunity for the Fair Housing Council of Oregon to express our support for Governor Brown's request for \$20 million for private rental market resources.

Sincerely,

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

Allan Lazo
Executive Director