



To:

The Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
jwmtr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

March 25, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Gomberg, and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development,

I am writing on behalf of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) to express our **support for Senate Bill 5512**, funding for the Oregon Housing and Community Service's LIFT program (POP 107) and the establishment of a program to acquire private rental homes at risk of gentrification (POP 111). As a statewide, grassroots organization, we work with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (API) across the state of Oregon to advance social justice. We believe *all* families deserve the rights, recognition, and resources they need in order to thrive.

Many of our members are low-income and working-class immigrants who live in rapidly gentrifying areas, making them more susceptible to rising rents and cost of living, houselessness, and redevelopment. We work to build power, health, and stability for the communities living in the Jade District by fighting for affordable housing, safe streets, an equitable community, and economic development. Yet many of our members still face significant challenges, from cultural and language barriers to economic burdens such as higher poverty rates, lower incomes, and lower earnings per capita.

APANO supports the increase funding of the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) program, because it builds new affordable housing for low income households. The LIFT program targets historically underserved communities, namely communities of color and rural communities, and is designed to serve families. This is a crucial program that would greatly help our Asians and Pacific Islanders access affordable housing and bring homeownership to our communities.

In 2017, homeownership rates ranged from 26% among Pacific Islanders to 63% among Asian households in Oregon, compared to a white homeownership rate of 65%. Critically, once we disaggregate the data for the Asian population further, we see that Southeast Asians, who fall under the large category of "Asian," have very different experiences. For example, from the American Community Survey, the homeownership rate among the Cambodian population in Oregon is at 33%, 52% for Thai, and 57% for Filipino. Certainly, our Asian community has very diverse populations within it and face very different challenges in accessing homeownership.



We also ask for the Committee's support for the funding of OHCS's new program to acquire attainable rental market housing; those that are affordable now without any public subsidy. This would greatly benefit our API members and community who are concentrated in low-income, gentrifying areas and who have large multigenerational families. OHCS's new program would work with high capacity owners and operators of multi-family housing to get properties out of the cycle of speculative real estate investment and move them into affordability status. OHCS would specifically target areas experiencing or at-risk of gentrification.

Portland, and several other cities throughout Oregon, have become segregated areas where people who work hard building, cleaning, and cooking in this city cannot afford to live in it. We must do better for our families. We urge the Committee to vote in support of SB 5512 to protect families from gentrification, to provide a pathway for our API communities to become homeowners, and overall, to ensure our families and neighbors are not houseless.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and urge the Committee to vote yes for SB 5512.

Sincerely,
Ivy Major-McDowall
Legislative Coordinator
APANO