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**TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HB 2001-16**  
**June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Dear Co-Chairs Manning and Gomberg, and members of the Joint Transportation and Economic Development Sub-Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Law Center (OLC), I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 2001, which would allow duplexes, triplexes, quads, and cottage clusters in cities of a certain size across the state. The bill would increase access to affordable housing and opportunity for all Oregonians.

OLC's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities of Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services. Helping families maintain safe, stable housing is a critical part of our work. Without stable housing, it is difficult or impossible to hold down a job, keep children in school, access neighborhood amenities, and stay healthy. As rental vacancy rates have plummeted and housing has become less and less affordable across the state, our clients have increasingly struggled to maintain stability for themselves and their children. An increasing number of our clients are homeless, and homeownership is ever-more out of reach of most Oregonians.

We know that this is not just an urban problem - rural Oregonians are particularly impacted.<sup>1</sup> More than 21,000 students experienced homelessness last year, with some of the highest rates coming from rural districts. Affordable housing is disproportionately difficult to find and maintain for communities of color, single women with children, seniors, and people with disabilities. While the risks and burdens of this crisis rest most heavily on the shoulders of low-income families, it is not only they who are impacted. We hear stories of middle income, working Oregonians living in their cars, seeking services from shelters, or desperately afraid of homelessness. This housing insecurity has untold negative consequences for the health, education, safety, and stability of all of our communities.

Passage of HB 2001-16 would ensure that cities offer more options for smaller and more affordable housing units in neighborhoods that are currently single-family zoned. Such "middle" housing is more attractive and accessible to smaller family units, seniors, members of our workforce, and lower income households. These Oregonians are important members of our communities, and they need and deserve safe and stable housing options in neighborhoods of opportunity, where they can access services, health care, education, and jobs. More affordable housing options in cities across our state will reduce homelessness and increase neighborhood stability.

Importantly, passage of HB 2001-16 is one step in the process of beginning to address the negative impacts of exclusionary zoning codes, racist redlining, and discriminatory lending practices that have denied opportunity to people of color. All Oregonians, whether brown, black, or white, deserve a safe and stable place to call home. Passage of this bill will help lead Oregon forward, towards a healthy and vibrant future where all families have the opportunity to thrive.

We appreciate that this legislature is poised to consider a variety of ways to help ensure access to stable, safe, affordable, and secure housing for all of our communities. HB 2001-16 is one part of this package of solutions to our current statewide housing crisis. For all of these reasons, we urge support of HB 2001 with the Dash 16 amendments, and we thank you for your time and work.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://oregoneconomicanalysis.com/2018/03/07/update-on-rural-housing-affordability/>