



February 3, 2020

To: House Committee on Human Services & Housing

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shannon Vilhauer, and I am the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon. I am writing to express our organization's strong support for HB 4039.

In 2018, Oregon Habitat for Humanity affiliates reached an important milestone: together we have made the dream of stable and affordable homeownership a reality for 2,000 Oregon households. All across the state, Habitat for Humanity Board members, staff, volunteers and future homeowners are rolling up our sleeves to build more affordable homes than ever.

Unfortunately, we can't build our way out of the problem quickly enough to meet the immediate needs of children, families and elders looking for a stable place to call home. We need to work collaboratively and address a range of issues in order to solve the housing problems our communities are facing.

We support HB 4039 because it addresses the needs of one especially vulnerable Oregon population: unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. The host home network coordinated by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon provides meaningful stability in the lives of young people, with impressive results for keeping kids in school and opening up opportunities for a strong future. We also endorse the common sense investment needed to expand the capacity of proven programs at the state level.

Once again, please support HB 4039. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Oregon and the 26 Habitat for Humanity affiliates building and repairing homes across the state, thank you for your service.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon M. Vilhauer".

Shannon M. Vilhauer, Executive Director

Habitat for Humanity of Oregon

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