



Feb. 4, 2020

To: Rep. Keny Guyer, Chair, House Human Services and Housing Committee, and  
Committee Members

From: Katie Rose, Chair, Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: HB 4002 Support for Long Term Rent Assistance Feasibility Study

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Chair Keny Guyer and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 36 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equality and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. We also have individual members who are people experiencing intellectual or developmental disabilities and their family members. We offer strong support for HB 4002 which will create a feasibility study for long-term rent assistance.

Housing gives all people the opportunity to build better lives. To succeed, you need a safe, appropriate and affordable place to call home. People experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families share similar stories with other Oregonians who struggle to access current federal rent assistance programs. These federal programs are not sufficient to meet the housing needs in Oregon. Only one in four eligible households are able to access the federal programs.

For people experiencing disabilities and their families, home means a stable, appropriate and affordable place where they can have supports to live and work as valued members of Oregon communities. When they cannot find a safe, affordable and appropriate place to call home, their supports are jeopardized or interrupted. Without supports, their ability to be community members is destabilized. When people lose or delay their supports, they risk losing their jobs, relationships and community connections – which are the major aspects of being a community member.

Two of our members are currently holding focus groups around Oregon to hear from the intellectual and developmental disabilities community about what home means to them. The preliminary results are striking: housing stability matters. Affordability matters. The ability to continue to live where you are successful matters.



Oregon DD  
Coalition

Advancing Opportunities

Our members heard from people experiencing intellectual or developmental disabilities and families that finding the right housing that is appropriate, decent and affordable is a major reason that people with IDD are able to work and live as valued community members. Our members also saw the extreme stress and feeling of powerlessness when people talked about having a home that worked for them, but feeling it was unattainable because of high rents and lack of subsidies.

Oregon has a long history of supporting people experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities to be community members, living and working alongside their neighbors.

Now, Oregon has the opportunity to pass HB 4002 to create a feasibility study for long term rent assistance. The study must consider the needs of different communities, including people with disabilities, which includes thousands of Oregonians with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We are ready and willing to offer input in the study to ensure the voice of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are heard in this important conversation.