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The Bend Heroes Foundation would like to testify in support of HB4001A.

Homelessness is a critical issue facing many communities in Oregon. There is an acute need for a solution to this issue in all our communities. HB4001 represents a significant opportunity for the State of Oregon to engage in and expedite solutions at the local level.

The Bend Heroes Foundation and Central Oregon Veterans Outreach (COVO) are currently developing a program for addressing Homelessness for Veterans in our community of Central Oregon. The Program, Central Oregon Veterans Village, intends to adopt the successful model developed by Clackamas County used for their Veterans Village.

Clackamas County has been operating its Veterans Village for sixteen (16) months, providing shelter, wrap around services and case management to its homeless veterans who reside in the Village. As a result, Clackamas County has successfully transitioned nineteen (19) homeless veterans to permanent housing.

The Central Oregon Veterans Village will consist of fifteen shelters and a community building and will be managed by COVO. Wrap around services and shelter will be provided for residents for stays of up to two years. The Village will be staffed by full time case managers and overseen by an oversight board. A screening process for entry and a code of conduct for continued residence will be utilized. The community will be fenced and secured.

COVO has been providing wrap around services to homeless veteran and non-veterans for over a decade. COVO employs evidence based and person-centered practices, and is CARF¹ accredited. Under another transitional housing program funded by a VA Grant, COVO achieved 76% success rate in program exits to long term housing.

COVO maintains a Veterans By-Name List (VBNL)², a registry of homeless veterans to whom it provides services and has been in contact with in the last year, which numbers more than 180 individuals. There were 63 homeless veterans identified by the Point in Time Count. Currently there are five (5) beds in our community available for emergency transitional services for homeless veterans, eligible for up to a 90 day stay.

HB4001A will allow the Central Oregon Veterans Village to accelerate its development and achieve the objective of providing shelter and services to fifteen (15) homeless veterans by Fall 2020. We believe that the success already witnessed by the Clackamas Program, and the success of the Central Oregon Veterans Village can serve as a compelling solution for the broader homeless population in our community and many other communities in our region.

We would like to thank Speaker Kotek for her vision in creating HB4001A, and Representative Helt for her support of the Bill and the Central Oregon Veterans Village Program.

Bend Heroes Foundation and Central Oregon Veterans Outreach are recognized by the IRS as 501(c)(3) Non Profits

¹Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services.

²The VBNL is required by HUD, intended to keep a real-time count of the number of Veterans who are living without a safe, stable, home to call their own. It was last reviewed for updates, based on information COVO has available, on Feb. 13th.