



HOUSING ALLIANCE

June 24, 2020

Speaker Kotek
President Courtney
Joint Committee on the First Special Session
Oregon Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, Vice-Co-Chair Girod, Vice-Co-Chair Drazan, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our strong support of HB 4210, which will eliminate debt-based drivers license suspensions.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of ninety organizations from all parts of the state. Our members have come together with the knowledge that housing opportunity is the foundation on which all of our success is built – individual success as students, parents, workers, and community members as well as the success of our communities. We represent a diverse set of voices including non-profit housing developers, residents of affordable housing, local jurisdictions, and organizations working to meet basic needs in every corner of our state.

We believe that all Oregonians need a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Many members of our community pay a significant portion of their income towards rent. Federal standards dictate that your housing is considered “affordable” if you pay approximately one-third of your income towards your housing costs, leaving money left over for food, medicine, and other basic necessities. Statewide, one out of three people who rent their home pays more than half of their income towards rent, and for people with the lowest incomes in our community, that number jumps to three out of four. For these renters, they have too little money left over for the basics, and one traffic ticket or fine may force them to choose between paying rent or paying the fine.

Particularly during this pandemic, it is critical that we do all we can to support people’s economic and housing stability.

The practice of debt based drivers license suspensions significantly and disproportionately impacts people with the lowest incomes and people of color. People with the lowest incomes are those who can least afford to lose their ability to drive to work or to pick up their children. The data shows us that people of color disproportionately experience traffic stops and fines.

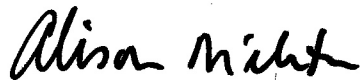
Our organizational members have shared stories of organizations using very limited flexible funds in order to help individuals experiencing homelessness and housing instability pay fines and fees to help their clients avoid having their license suspended. These limited funds would otherwise go towards helping people pay for child care, new work clothes, or even an emergency rent payment.

Debt based suspension of drivers licenses is unnecessary and harms people with the lowest incomes in our community. It can impact someone's ability to maintain housing stability, or return to housing, and exit homelessness. In addition, we now know that the policy is ineffective, and there are more effective ways of collecting fines and fees.

We urge you to support HB 4210 during this special session.

Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McIntosh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison McIntosh
On Behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance

Housing Alliance Members

1000 Friends of Oregon
211info
Aging in the Gorge
Benton Habitat for Humanity
Bienestar
Bradley Angle
BRIDGE Housing
Business for a Better Portland
CASA of Oregon
Chrisman Development
Central City Concern
Church Women United of Lane County
City of Beaverton
City of Eugene
City of Forest Grove
City of Hillsboro
City of Portland
City of Tigard
Clackamas County
Coalition of Community Health Clinics
Coalition of Housing Advocates
College Housing Northwest
Community Action Partnership of Oregon
Community Action Team
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Development Partners
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Community Vision
Cornerstone Community Housing
DevNW
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Enhabit
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Farmworker Housing Development Corp.
FOOD for Lane County
Habitat for Humanity of Oregon
Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East
Hacienda CDC
Housing Authorities of Oregon
Housing Authority of Clackamas County
Housing Development Center
Housing Oregon
Human Solutions
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization

Impact Northwest
Innovative Housing, Inc.
Interfaith Alliance on Poverty
JOIN
Lane County Health and Human Services
League of Oregon Cities
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Lincoln County
Looking Glass Community Services
Mainstream Housing Inc.
Metro
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
NAYA Family Center
Neighborhood Partnerships
NeighborImpact
NeighborWorks Umpqua
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
Northwest Housing Alternatives
Northwest Pilot Project
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Oregon Coalition on Housing & Homelessness
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
Oregon Food Bank
Our Children Oregon
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
Portland Homeless Family Solutions
Proud Ground
Raphael House
REACH CDC
Residents Organizing for Change (ROC) Oregon
Rogue Action Center
Rose CDC
St. Francis Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Inc.
ShelterCare
Sisters Habitat for Humanity
Sponsors, Inc.
SquareOne Villages
Street Roots
Think Real Estate
Transition Projects
Washington County
Welcome Home Coalition