

Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices

Testimony to Joint Interim Committee on the Second Special Session of 2021

Joint Resolution LC9: Housing Safe Harbor Bill

Co-chair Beyer, Co-chair Fahey, Co-Vice-Chair Knopp, Co-Vice-Chair Wallan, Members of the Committee:

My name is Karen Nettler, I am a board member of Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices (OCCV). We are a faith-based organization advocating for laws that protect the well-being of all in our communities, and most particularly for those most at risk. We partner with Oregon Housing Alliance in advocating for safe shelter for all our neighbors.

Our state budget is a moral document, revealing what our priorities are as a society. As people of faith, we take our lead from our sacred texts, noting that Jesus focused on the most basic of human needs when he spoke of how we should be together in community. The need for safe and stable housing is a fundamental need, without which the health, safety and security of families is profoundly at risk. And, a society that allows a lack of affordable housing is a society at risk. It is asking too much to expect our neighbors to function well at work, at school, in our communities, when they are suffering the trauma of not having stable, safe housing. As Matthew Desmond says in his book Evicted, "...without stable shelter, everything else falls apart."

It is both a moral imperative and a matter of common sense that stable housing should be one of our highest priorities. We have the capacity to assure that those whose lives have been disrupted in so many ways during this time of pandemic and uncertainty, will at least have the means to maintain housing, will not have to endure the trauma of not knowing for sure if they and their families will have safe shelter.

We urge this committee to vote in support of LC9, believing that its provisions reflect our moral commitment as a society to assure the basic protection of a secure and safe place to call home.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony, and for the work and service you provide on behalf of all of us.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Nettler, OCCV board chair
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