



# HOUSING ALLIANCE

January 28, 2021

Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Oregon Housing Alliance to express our support for HB 2097, which will allow Oregon Housing and Community Services to define ‘veteran’ in rule for their programs and services.

The Oregon Housing Alliance is a coalition of more than 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 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 deserve a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that already, too many seniors, families, and people who experience disabilities were paying too much of their income towards rent, and were experiencing other forms of housing instability. Today, we simply don’t have enough affordable homes for people who need them, and vacancy rates have dropped precipitously towards zero in communities across Oregon. People – our neighbors and members of our community – are struggling with homelessness, housing instability, rent burdens, and to make ends meet and put food on the table.

Veterans experience disproportionate rates of housing instability and homelessness after returning from service. In addition to navigating the tight rental and housing market in Oregon, veterans must also contend with the challenges of multiple or extended deployments, and returning after their service. National research indicates that veterans from all conflicts are affected by homelessness, and for more recent veterans, they may be contending with traumatic brain injuries or post traumatic stress disorders.

All veterans deserve a safe, and stable place to call home. Over the years, significant progress has been made in Oregon and nationally to address homelessness and housing instability among veterans by dedicating specific resources to solve the problem. Federally, there are supportive service and rent assistance programs targeted to veterans, and here in Oregon, twenty-five

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[www.oregonhousingalliance.org](http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org)

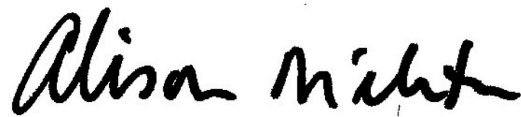
percent of the document recording fee for affordable housing goes to prevent and end homelessness, build affordable housing, and support access to homeownership for veterans.

The change proposed in HB 2097 would allow Oregon Housing and Community Services to define 'veteran' in rule for their programs. For many veterans, they may be ineligible for the programs operated by OHCS because they may have received a discharge that is other than honorable, including people who were negatively impacted by previous policies such as 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' or pregnancy.

We urge your support of HB 2097 so that OHCS may address the housing needs of more veterans.

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  
Central City Concern  
Chrisman Development  
Church Women United of Lane County  
City of Beaverton  
City of Eugene  
City of Forest Grove  
City of Hillsboro  
City of Hood River  
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  
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  
Home Forward  
Homes for Good  
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

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