

To: Chair Senator Kaysee Jama, Vice-Chair Senator Dennis Linthicum and members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development
From: Anne Nesse, Director <http://SustainableEconomiesNW.com>
Testimony in Favor of SB 852



For many years now I have watched as incomes between the top 10-20% of Oregonians have widened. Creating a huge economic divide, which ranks among the largest (by comparison to the other industrialized countries) in the world. A divide that can permanently prevent those who are in the lower income brackets from ever owning a small home, and becoming more secure.

And what we don't often look at is even more permanently damaging to Oregon. Our younger generation is suffering from this economic divide (increased drug addiction, increased mental illness, increased suicide rates, increased incarceration, increased domestic violence, to name just a few). This divide, and its resulting affects and state costs, has been proven by un-refutable statistics in a book "The Spirit Level, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett". It is ludicrous to continue to go on like this statistically, logically, and emotionally. Eliminating the mortgage interest deduction for wealthier groups, on the ownership of their primary residence is a good starting place in the passage of SB 852. Let's be smarter in our governance.

By solid estimates we actually spend more of our taxpayer dollar on fixing the emotional problems we create, with laws that assist only the wealthy and help to create increasing income inequality. Why should we recklessly create problems that require so much taxpayer dollar to fix? Income inequality makes it more difficult for people who are working, if able, to own a small home and feel secure in their society. While we actively assist only our wealthier citizens with a mortgage interest deduction. We need to fix this archaic tax advantage fairly with the passage of SB 852..

And in fact if we were really thoughtful, we should give everyone in Oregon the same gift. A mortgage interest deduction for a small home or apartment, under 1,000 sq. ft? That would be the most sustainable for all.

Thank you for reading my testimony,
Anne Nesse