

April 9, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee

I write to you today on behalf of Mercy Housing Northwest, in support of SB 5505, and the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds.

Mercy Housing Northwest is a leading nonprofit affordable housing developer and operator across the Pacific Northwest. We have 55 properties, over 2,500 apartments, and 6,500 residents call our properties home every day.

**At Mercy Housing Northwest, affordable housing is a platform for transformation.** We believe in the power of a stable home to address some of our communities' and our nation's most pressing needs: income inequality, disparate access to education, and the long-standing systemic barriers that serve to perpetuate these inequities.



Siblings play on the playground at Mercy's Gardner House community

Mercy Housing Northwest provides Service-Enriched Housing to help residents first achieve stability and then enhance that stability. We accomplish this with dedicated and well-trained staff, extensive community partnerships, culturally responsive practice, and a focus on measurable outcomes which evidence resident stability and success.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, Oregon was already experiencing a housing crisis, and too many of our neighbors and community members were experiencing housing instability.

In the 2019-20 school year, over 21,000 kids experienced homelessness at some point during the year, with their families. Due to COVID and the early closure of schools, we know this is likely an undercount.

Since 2015, the Legislature has committed millions in general obligation bonds to the LIFT program, and over 3,600 affordable homes have been or are being built. These homes are being built in communities across Oregon – Newport to Ontario, Klamath Falls to Astoria, Roseburg, Hermiston, Eugene, Bend, Redmond, and Sisters, and everywhere in between. With additional resources, we can support more of this work and build projects across Oregon to provide safe and stable places to call home for members of our communities.

Through long-term affordable housing, paired with supportive services, like educational programs, health & wellness, and community economic empowerment, we can help families, children, and senior across Oregon remain stably housed and thrive.

We urge your support for the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds in SB 5505.



Thank you for your time and for your service to the State of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Joe Thompson  
President  
Mercy Housing Northwest

Mercy Housing Northwest

6930 Martin Luther King Jr Way S, Seattle, Washington 98118

o | 206-602-3481 f | 206-838-5705 | [mercyhousingnorthwest.org](http://mercyhousingnorthwest.org)