



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

April 9, 2021

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee

Re: **SB 5505** – Bonding for Housing – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available, have the right to an income and/or services to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care. State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.

We are writing in support of SB 5505, which includes \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing development (PHS) across Oregon using Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds. Oregon’s severe lack of affordable housing is causing housing instability and homelessness in every corner of our state and we clearly need additional units in order to address the unmet need.

Study after study has shown that supportive housing not only resolves homelessness and increases housing stability, but also improves health and lowers public costs by reducing the use of publicly-funded crisis services, including shelters, hospitals, psychiatric centers, jails, and prisons.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates that Oregon currently is in need of 12,472 PSH homes across the state in order to adequately serve our most vulnerable neighbors. This population includes Oregonians with complex medical conditions and behavioral health disorders, individuals reentering the community from prison or exiting a state hospital, and families involved in the child welfare system. We also know that there are disproportionate impacts on people of color within this need. With homelessness affecting people of color at nearly quadruple the rate of white households, a thoughtful PSH strategy can help reduce disparities and create equitable outcomes.

Across Oregon, affordable housing developers are working in partnership with health systems to build supportive housing and provide services to the residents. We urge your support for the \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds included in SB 5505.

Thank you for your service and the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona
LWVOR Housing Policy Portfolio