

House Committee on Revenue
Re: Support for HB 2008A

4/27/2021

Chair and committee members, I appreciate the opportunity to support HB 2008 with amendments. I'm Mari Anne Gest representing Church at the Park (C@P) which is a non-profit organization serving unsheltered individuals and families since 2007 in the Salem area.

C@P seeks the mutual transformation of unsheltered people, our staff, and our volunteers through relationships, agency partnerships, and tangible resources. The 20/20 Point in Time Count for Oregon indicated that 61 percent of people experiencing homelessness are unsheltered in places not meant for human habitation. Additionally, the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance conducted a Service Gap Analysis in July of 2020 publishing that, "culturally-specific and low-barrier shelters were identified to be most urgent, specifically for women, youth, families, and non-sobriety required eligibility."

Recognizing the dire need for safe shelter options, C@P has expanded services to include outreach, navigation, and low-barrier shelter options of all types. We are located directly adjacent to Salem's Gateway park, where many unhoused individuals are camping. C@P was recently awarded funding to expand the day center to services to 20 hours a week, serving meals, providing laundry services, showers, mail service, and case management.

HB 2008A creates more options and incentives to serve the unsheltered. We appreciate your support.

Mari Anne Gest
865 Valleywood Dr. SE
Salem, Or 97306
503-851-8845
mgest@msn.com