

Testimony on HB2336 – 2/18/21

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. AGE+ is an Oregon nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of older adults and their families. We bring decades of expertise in the field of aging, especially housing and services for older adults in rural areas. Another of our imperatives is educating and empowering communities to prepare for our state's changing age structure:

- By 2035, the number of Oregonians 75 and older will double.
- In rural places, the ratio of 65+ will grow to 1 in 4.
- Essentially, our pyramid population structure will morph to a pillar where we will have just as many older adults as we do children.

This shift is inescapable, permanent and touches us all — as individuals, family members, friends and community members.

With this approaching reality, comes the need to begin preparing for nearly one quarter of our population requiring more accessible living accommodations to successfully age in place and stay integrated through visiting loved ones. By defining visitability for residential housing with HB2336, we can proactively identify and give practical guidance for those builders bringing to market housing that is effective and appealing to this growing demographic. No doubt aspects of visitability will increasingly become in high demand throughout our communities. Getting ahead of this trend now will provide tremendous value and encourage creative housing solutions in the long run.

We would be remiss not to recognize that visitability might be more challenging in some locations than others and potentially add costs which would make increasing the supply of affordable housing more challenging. But we are confident that incentives could be developed to address these concerns.