

Members of the House Committee on Housing,

I write you in my personal capacity to urge your support of HB 2004. HB 2004 directs the Housing and Community Services Department to study issues relating to housing and report to appropriate committee or interim committee of Legislative Assembly on or before September 15, 2022. HB 2004 is also the vehicle for funding one of Salem's key priorities, amendment includes \$5,000,000 to the City of Salem for a navigation center. A navigation center offers a stable place to shelter and serve the most vulnerable among us.

I have volunteered at a variety of homeless service shelters and day centers, interviewed about half of the homeless service providers in the city, and spent a great deal of time speaking with our unsheltered, community partners, experts, and homeless advocates. These experiences demonstrated the profound need for a navigation center.

I visited the Legislature last year to lobby for funding a navigation center, and the need is even greater now. Our statewide homelessness crisis has worsened, thanks to layoffs brought on by the pandemic, and a housing crunch made worse by the destruction of homes lost to the wildfires. Recently, Salem opened a 100-person temporary shelter at the Oregon State Fairgrounds. We reached capacity within 24 hours.

Make no mistake, it is not only those without shelter who support funding for a navigation center. I've spoken with numerous business owners and staff who fully support moving our unsheltered indoors. The visibility of homelessness is top of mind for many retailers, restaurateurs, hoteliers, and other brick-and-mortar entrepreneurs.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions. Please email me at vnordyke@cityofsalem.net.