



February 23, 2021

House Committee on Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Morgan, Vice-Chair Campos, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today on behalf of Business For A Better Portland to express our support for HB 2163, which will create a long-term rental assistance program for youth experiencing homelessness. Business For A Better Portland is a membership organization of over 375 companies and organizations who believe that in order for businesses to thrive they need to be doing business in a thriving community.

We represent a diversity of business sectors including technology, design, grocery, architecture, development, legal, retail and restaurant. Our members' concern about the homelessness crisis was actually one of the primary drivers for the creation of our organization. Since our inception in 2017, we have worked collaboratively with local, regional and state government leaders to advance comprehensive solutions to this crisis. We are fortunate to among our Affiliate Membership a number of nonprofit organizations that serve homeless youth including p:ear and Bridge Meadows.

In a community that has so much prosperity, it is unconscionable that Oregon has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness in the nation. HB 2163 would seek to transform the outcomes for youth through a long-term rent assistance pilot program that targets one of the primary entry points into adult homelessness. It also seeks to provide stability and support to youth as they transition from childhood to adulthood so they can have access to the same education and training opportunities just like their counterparts who are housed and living with family.

Long term rent assistance can support youth to transition to adulthood and access career and educational opportunities, find safety, and receive the support they need. We urge your support of HB 2163. Thank you very much for your time, and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley Henry".

Ashley Henry
Executive Director