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HB 3032

Dear Honorable Chair Dexter and Members of the Committee,

I am a retired college administrator and professor writing in support of HB3032.

As a person of faith and a citizen of this state, I have been concerned for many years about homelessness and housing affordability, which, as we all know, have only become much more problematic in recent years. Since 1993 I have volunteered and served on the board of Operation Nightwatch, a forty-year-old nonprofit that provides hospitality to unhoused and other low-income people in downtown Portland. In addition, I am active in the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty, a coalition of thirteen faith communities that has taken a keen interest in these problems. For the past two years, I have been a strong supporter of Homeshare Oregon and it is in that capacity that I am testifying today.

I applaud all efforts by the public and private sectors to address these serious problems by increasing the supply of affordable housing. But those efforts take time, and we have to find other means of helping homeless and rent-burdened people while waiting for the housing supply to ramp up. Home sharing represents an important way to respond to immediate needs. It is estimated that there are as many 1.5 million empty bedrooms in our state. If even a small percentage of those rooms could become available, it would make a significant difference.

HB3032 will help incentivize homeowners to share their empty rooms with low-income renters. For homeowners who need help paying their mortgages, property taxes, or other expenses it will provide a significant opportunity.

I realize that tax breaks reduce state revenue and should not be granted without serious consideration. In this case, the cost of the tax reductions will be more than offset by the benefits of providing much needed housing. Supporting home sharing is an efficient use of state resources. I urge you to support HB3032.

David H. Groff Ph.D.