

Submitter: Erica Maranowski

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB603

My name is Erica Maranowski, and I am a proud supporter of SB603: People's Housing Assistance Fund.

I have lived in Portland, Oregon almost my entire life. As a child, I experienced ongoing housing instability, as well as intermittent homelessness. My mother and I also lived in affordable housing during my childhood. Navigating housing barriers was extremely difficult: the high costs, long wait lists, limited affordable housing units, and limited subsidies.

The stability I now have as an adult is, without a doubt, partly due to the housing programs that helped support my mother and I years ago. However, that support was tenuous, and we stayed on wait lists for many years. If one more thing had gone wrong, or if our wait list had been just a little longer, things could have gone very badly for us.

If my mother and I had had earlier and more stable access to a program like the People's Housing Assistance Fund (SB603), our lives would have been radically improved in countless ways. My mother, who is disabled, thankfully still lives in affordable housing; I am constantly grateful for this, because I cannot afford to financially support her alongside paying my own rent. My mother would likely be homeless right now if she were not in affordable housing, and she is one of the lucky ones.

After someone has become homeless, the public and personal cost to get them re-housed is extremely high. Like with medicine, a preventative approach is best and cheapest in the long-term, for all parties involved. Preventing homelessness is the most effective policy to reduce rates of homelessness, and reduce costs to local, state, and federal governments. Stable housing is essential to a healthy and functional society.

As an adult, I have also spent significant time in a dozen countries, and have seen how much better housing systems can be. Government support, subsidization, and protection of housing is the norm in many other places, including France, Singapore, and Germany. The US lags behind the world in housing policy and protections. We can do better – and we must. Please support SB603, and help Oregon lead on effective housing policy for individuals, families, communities, and our entire economy.

Thank you for your time,
Erica Maranowski, Portland Resident & SB603 Supporter