



March 2, 2023

Senator Aaron Woods  
Representative David Gomberg  
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means, Transportation and Economic Development  
Subcommittee  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for SB 5511

Dear Co-Chairs Woods, Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today to express HereTogether's support for the \$415.45 million in proposed investments to address homelessness in SB 5511. Addressing homelessness and housing affordability is a top issue for people across the state and one that transcends the dividing lines of geography or party affiliation. As we have found in our work with a tri-county, broad based coalition, we all agree that addressing this crisis is critical for the safety and well-being of people in every community.

These investments would go a long way toward reducing unsheltered homelessness this year by funding new and existing shelter beds, rehousing unsheltered individuals, and hiring more housing navigators to help individuals move from streets and shelter to permanent housing. Funding this continuum from streets to housing, with housing as the end goal, is critical in our response to homelessness.

Moreover, we know the fastest way to end someone's homelessness is by preventing it in the first place and the investments outlined in SB 5511 include crucial funding for eviction prevention and rapid rehousing services to ensure people are able to stay in their homes and out of the cycle of homelessness.

These investments align with the strategies the HereTogether coalition recommends in the [2023 HereTogether Roadmap](#), which outline proven solutions that can be scaled up to accelerate our community's response to homelessness.

We appreciate Governor Kotek's commitment to this issue and the investments to address homelessness outlined in SB 5511. We urge you to make these investments without delay.

Sincerely,  
Cole Merkel  
Co-Director, HereTogether  
[cole@heretogetheroregon.org](mailto:cole@heretogetheroregon.org)

*HereTogether—a 250+ member coalition comprising service providers, business leaders, faith leaders, advocates and more—strives to create a Portland metro region where homelessness is rare and brief by advocating for near term and permanent solutions, systems change and accountability necessary to effectively scale up resources and serve our most vulnerable neighbors.*