

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Wood and Gomberg and members of the committee. My name is Jenny Kim and I serve as one of the Co-Chairs for the Racial Justice Council's Committee on Housing and Homelessness. I am writing to urge support for sections 1-2 & 19-20 of the dash three amendments of House Bill 5019.

Our work on the RJC Housing and Homeless Committee has focused on envisioning and building an Oregon in which Black and Indigenous people, and all communities of color, are cherished, and thriving. We envision an Oregon that houses all people, and provides access to culturally-relevant and adaptive care services and supports.

We are grateful for the Governor's leadership in declaring a homelessness state of emergency and are grateful for all of the leadership on this committee and in the legislature in addressing this crisis.

The issue of homelessness touches every corner of our state and in some communities, the crisis is so severe that it requires our full attention. The dash three amendments of this bill provides support to every community in the state while prioritizing the areas that need the most help.

We need to move people from unsheltered homeless into housing and we need to do what we can to prevent thousands of individuals and families from becoming homeless. This bill does both.

It provides homelessness prevention for 8,750 Oregonians. This is critically important to ensure that we prevent new households from becoming homeless to the greatest extent possible and provide the supports for families to live in dignity and thrive. During the pandemic, community organizations across the state came together with state and local governments to help keep people in their homes. This bill provides us with the opportunity to build upon those relationships to ensure that these critical investments reach people in an accessible and culturally-responsive way.

This bill will add 700 low-barrier shelter beds statewide. We need to meet people where they are at in order to set them up for long-term success. As we create more shelter options to move people off the street, we can connect them to services that address their behavioral health needs.

Another critical component of the bill is its focus on rehousing 1,650 households and providing them with supportive services so they can successfully remain housed. Supportive housing works. We've seen what can happen when the government partners with the network of community providers who work on the front-lines to provide effective, culturally-specific supportive care. People get housed and stay housed.

As you all know, people of color are overrepresented as our neighbors and loved ones who experience homelessness.

We also appreciate the direct allocation to Tribes and the commitment to help grow capacity in community-based organizations working with communities of color. We trust that as the multi-agency coordinating teams look to invest these funds, they will have a focus on equity.

At the end of the day, this bill is about partnership and people.

It's building and strengthening partnership between the state and local government and the multi-agency coordinating committees. It's building partnering with landlords and community service providers.

House Bill 5019 invests in people, it sets meaningful outcomes to ensure we are making real progress towards ending homelessness. It invests in our communities and it invests in a future where all of our neighbors are housed and supported. It invests in a brighter future for all of us.