



SB 936: Provides grants to developers of affordable single-family homes made available for homeownership

Senate Committee on Housing and Development | Richard Swift | 3/13/2023

Good morning, Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson and members of the committee, my name is Richard Swift, please accept this statement for the record on behalf of Tax Fairness Oregon (TFO), a network of volunteers who advocate for a rational and equitable tax code. TFO's members have a range of experiences with the tax code over decades as professionals and volunteers. I spent my career in Oregon in local government focusing including 10 years leading and directing housing for Clackamas County.

My housing experience is fairly broad. I directed and led one of the state's housing authorities, built low income housing projects ranging from 20 units to 240 units providing housing for individuals and families with average incomes as low as 90% of the federal poverty level. I was also responsible for a community development program that assisted low income homeowners with envelope and other real property improvements. Most of this work focused on creation of rental units for the low income population.

TFO usually focused on legislation affecting Oregon's tax code. We have testified on a number of bills related to housing that would, if passed, affect state revenue, for example SB944. In that testimony I discussed the hope that the legislature would consider a program that creates options for single family homeownership like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program has done with over 2 million low income rental units built since its inception. SB 936 is a far more direct step toward that end than what I imagined in my testimony on SB 944.

We are pleased to see a bill with this level of support to create homeownership opportunities for low income wage earners. SB 936 is a good initial step to addressing the gap that exists between housing costs and affordable mortgages for those with little means who want to reside in their own homes.

We read the bills and follow the money