



Submitter: Ramon A. Hernandez

Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

Measure: SB 918

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Ramon Hernandez,

First of all I want to thank you for all you do in communities across Oregon helping families address and advance diverse, equal and proper housing needs. As the Community Engagement Officer at (MWVCAA) Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, I urge the support of the -2 amendments to SB 918 which will continue building upon existing homeless service programs. The policy will aid in reducing racial disparities and longtime disinvestment of our black and brown communities by addressing shortcomings in the state's housing and homeless services. The state of Oregon up to this point has made significant progress in promoting fair housing policies that promote diversity, so today let us continue upon that progress and promote positive change in order to combat the ongoing housing crisis.

I hope that the committee will recognize and advocate for individuals and families that are currently living in fear over the fact that they may lose their home. We ask for a housing and homeless services plan to create a dedicated stream of funding for culturally responsive organizations with deep roots in their communities. Creating these investments now will assure that we have a plan for preserving our community and assuring human life is cared for. We must continue to maintain our commitment in serving at-risk and homeless populations, investing additional funding which will ensure that all Oregonians have access to a safe and stable place to call home.

Our agency is now serving fewer people than we were four years ago. This is due to the fact that inflation has proved difficult to manage. Additionally, with SNAP benefit reductions decreasing and Oregon Health Plan coverage ending for as many as 300,000 low-income Oregonians, we need to respond and continue to protect our most vulnerable populations. Certainly a 14.6% increase in rent will not help either so please join me in supporting this bill which would mean taking effective action and prevent tragedy for countless families across the state.

Thank you for the time and consideration.

Ramon A. Hernandez

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency