



**UCP
Connections**

305 NE 102nd Ave Suite 100
Portland OR 97220

March 28, 2023

To: Senate Committee On Housing and Development

From: UCP Connections & UCP Mentors Re: Support for SB 611

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Helfrich and members of the Senate Committee On Housing and Development,

My name is Glenna Hayes and I am the Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator for UCP Connections and UCP Mentors. We are an organization that supports people 18 years and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We support roughly 900 customers. I am writing on behalf of UCP in support of SB611.

Within our community of diverse and intersectional identities, needs and income housing is one of the biggest barriers. It is also one of the biggest fears for many in our community. If they cannot afford to live in certain locations it pushes them out of the service range for some, if not all of their needs. Many cannot move, even if the location is not livable because there is simply not enough affordable housing in Oregon. Some are having to stay living in the parents' home well past their age of comfort just to make sure they can access the supports and services they need. Unfortunately, we have seen some folks making the decision to move into a group home because they simply cannot find housing to get their supports. This takes away their choice on how they want to receive supports and services.

The housing crisis needs to be address in a multi-facet approach. Yes, we need more development for housing, **and** we also need to be able to afford to pay rent. With SSI maxing out at \$914 a month this leaves many people stuck in a cycle of poverty, unable to get out of debt and many unable to work a full time job due to the income barriers with SSI. SSI is not just income; it is also what qualifies people for supports. This cycle of poverty and fear takes a heavy toll



UCP Connections

305 NE 102nd Ave Suite 100
Portland OR 97220

mentally and physically on our community. Which leaves many accessing crisis services and emergency funding which cost Oregonian even more money.

If no one can afford to live in Oregon except for people making a large enough income to pay rent and other necessities, what will our state look like? We see this piece of legislation impacting many communities which make Oregon diverse. We are people, we are a community, we are more than profit and numbers. Our lives depend on housing. Our services depend on housing.

We support SB611 ation because we see it as a step to address some of the financial barriers many folks are facing when trying to access and maintain housing. Please pass SB611 so we can address the housing crisis and prevent more people from being priced out of their homes.

Below are some lived experiences we want to highlight.

Scott is an elder who has been houseless for 5 years. He is on SSI, but only gets roughly \$600 a month. Due to Scott living in his van while sitting on wait list for subsidized housing he has lost 2 toes and a finger due to health conditions. Scott is 65 years old. Even with subsidized housing, it would take half if not all of his income leaving him to rely on other financial supports to cover utilities, a phone and transportation to his appointments. Due to Scott being houseless it also limits the direct supports he needs to maintain his health. We should not have our elders on the street, discarded and dying simply because we do not have affordable housing.

Izzie was a black trans woman in her late 20s who was living on the street. Due to her disability she was targeted and exploited financially, physically and mentally. We were working on getting her housing and addiction services but the wait list was long and she simply did not make enough to get into housing. We had no immediate solutions to help her get into housing, which was the first step for her



305 NE 102nd Ave Suite 100
Portland OR 97220

before she wanted addiction supports. Izzie being a black, disabled trans woman who was out on the street resulted in her death. She was 28 when she died.

These are just two examples out of hundreds we have about how affordable housing (which makes housing accessible!) impacts people in our community.

Please pass SB611 to help with the burden many renters, families, **people** are dealing with. Thank you for your time

Sincerely,

Glenna Hayes

Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator of UCP Connections & UCP Mentors