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Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and committee members:

My name is Jonathan Frochtz wajg; I'm the Public-Policy Manager for Cascade AIDS Project, or CAP, the largest HIV-services provider in Oregon. Because housing stability is a key social determinant of health for people living with HIV, CAP provides a comprehensive array of housing services for people who are HIV-positive, including emergency rent assistance to prevent homelessness. That's why I'm testifying today in support of Senate Bill 1530—particularly the bill's appropriation of \$40 million for homelessness prevention services.

Like too many people in Oregon, a lot of the folks CAP serves are one big expense away from not being able to make rent—one car repair, one reduction in work hours, one illness. Homelessness-prevention funding keeps these temporary difficulties from becoming life-changing events due to eviction. It also saves the state and local governments the much higher cost of rehousing people after they've been evicted.

We are pleased to see that the –3 amendment to SB 1530 allows the homelessness-prevention funding allocated by this legislation to be used for services administered by culturally responsive organizations. We encourage you to go further in the budget note by setting aside 30% of the funds for culturally responsive organizations, as requested by Governor Kotek. Given the disproportionate impact of housing instability on people of color and LGBTQ+ people, and given that culturally responsive organizations are best positioned to reach these communities, setting funds aside for culturally responsive groups will help ensure this assistance gets to those who are most likely to need it.

Finally, I want to briefly express CAP's support for the –3 amendment's appropriation of \$1 million for furniture-bank services. CAP relies heavily on a furniture bank, Community Warehouse, to provide basic furnishings and household goods for our newly housed clients—especially clients coming from long-term houselessness—and we've seen firsthand how important these items are in helping clients achieve success in their new housing. So, please do approve the proposed furniture-bank funding.

With appreciation,

Jonathan Frochtz wajg
Public Policy & Grants Manager, Cascade AIDS Project