

February 13th, 2024

Support for Rent Assistance Investments to Prevent Homelessness

SB 1530

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Housing and Development Committee:

It's time to ensure adequate investment in rental assistance and eviction prevention, to prevent homelessness in Oregonian. Oregon is among the states with the most cost-burdened renters in the nation. As a result, Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation.

With a sharp spike in high-rent homelessness, it's urgent that you invest in proven prevention strategies that keep Oregonians housed. At current levels of need, the funds previously allocated will be gone by July 2024. The legislature must fully fund the Stable Homes for Oregon package included in Fair Shot's People's Budget which has had a proven track record of keeping working Oregonians safe and stable.

Altogether, this package calls for:

- \$45 million in rent assistance through community action agencies and community-based organizations.
- \$6.5 million to the Urban League of Oregon for culturally specific housing stability services.
- \$6 million to the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief for housing stability services for immigrant Oregonians.
- \$2 million for outreach services for residents of expiring affordable housing units.

86% of eviction filings are for nonpayment, against people who have fallen behind on their rent. There are close to 2000 eviction filings a month. The availability of rent assistance for tenants in the critical time of need will help ensure that landlords get paid, evictions are avoided, and most importantly, Oregonians stay housed.

Hardworking Oregonians are struggling to make ends meet, facing eviction and homelessness as a result. It is ten times less expensive to prevent homelessness than it

is to respond to it. The People's Budget investments will keep people housed, while we work towards long-term solutions to end our housing and affordability crisis.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Doyle B Thibert

With so many Oregonians either living on the streets or only one paycheck or loss of employment from being homeless, there are only two possibilities: These Oregonians are either grossly inept with money management or deserving of their homeless status for some unknown reasons, or we as Oregonians, are doing something wrong--and vastly counterproductive. Obviously, the answer is the latter. The time has come to address the housing burdened and hungry who either live on our streets or are just one unforeseen setback from becoming homeless. In the past Oregonians could afford a decent apartment in Portland, OR, the Metro Area, and Oregon State at large.

Times have changed this past decade or so, and rent costs are beyond any reasonable amount that a working person could afford, let alone the low-income and the working poor. A Measure of successful societies is how well their neediest persons are cared for. In this sense Oregon has failed to provide a safety net for the low-income and underserved. I believe strongly in the following principle as indicated by Matthew 25:44-45. '...I assure you that when you haven't done it for one of the least of these, you haven't done it for me.' It is in this spirit I ask that you please support SB 1530, and financially assist those Oregonians who are so burdened and struggling to survive.

Thank you for your consideration,

Doyle Thibert, ROC Member