

Submitter: Lynn Travis  
On Behalf Of: Oregon's Furniture Banks  
Committee: Senate Committee On Housing and Development  
Measure: SB1530

Chair Jayma and Committee Members - I am writing in support of the testimony provided by the 3 executive directors of Oregon's furniture banks. Their presentation identified "furniture poverty" as a critical component of Oregon's housing crisis as well as how limited infrastructure hinders their ability to create homes for individuals and families moving into housing. I want to supplement that testimony with 3 examples of how Community Warehouse (Portland's furniture bank) effects clients' lives.

I am a volunteer with Community Warehouse. I was fortunate to assist with client interviews for a qualitative assessment the Warehouse conducted before the pandemic. I spoke with clients 6 months after they received home goods and furniture from the Warehouse. Each story demonstrated how alleviating furniture poverty strengthens family and community connections:

(1) A client received comfortable chairs for their living space, enabling their elderly parents to visit frequently. The client had old lawn chairs before their trip to the Warehouse that troubled their parents' backs.

(2) A young mother selected a very large area rug that covered her apartment's carpeting. Because of that, she can let her children play in the living room without worrying about damaging the carpeting - one less stress in a stressful life.

(3) A Veteran client, housed for the first time in over 20 years, identified his mattress as the best part of his trip to the Warehouse. After sleeping on the ground, in cars, and in doorways; having a consistent and comfortable spot to sleep was the highlight. He also identified the value of freeing up time because he didn't have to look for and move furniture. Without that task on his plate (and well rested), he organized a community garden in his apartment complex.

In conclusion, alleviating furniture poverty eases burdens on newly housed individuals and families; and has impact beyond their homes' doors. The comparatively small allocation for furniture banks in SB 1530 is money well spent. Thank you.

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Volunteer, Community Warehouse