

February 14, 2024

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

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to emphasize the critical need for increased investment in rental assistance and eviction prevention in Oregon. As you are aware, our state is grappling with a high rate of homelessness, largely attributed to the challenges faced by cost-burdened renters.

The urgency of the situation is underscored by the imminent depletion of funds allocated for these purposes, expected to run out by July 2024. I urge you to fully support the Stable Homes for Oregon package within Fair Shot's People's Budget. This comprehensive plan has demonstrated success in maintaining housing stability for working Oregonians.

The proposed package includes essential components such as \$45 million in rent assistance through community action agencies, \$6.5 million for culturally specific housing stability services via the Urban League of Oregon, \$6 million to the Home Fund at Oregon Worker Relief for housing stability services benefiting immigrant Oregonians, and \$2 million for outreach services to residents of expiring affordable housing units.

Given that 86% of eviction filings result from nonpayment, it is crucial to provide timely rent assistance to tenants facing financial hardships. Nearly 2000 eviction filings per month highlight the scale of the problem. Allocating funds to support tenants during critical times will not only ensure landlords receive payment but also prevent evictions, ultimately helping Oregonians retain stable housing.

It's important to recognize that investing in prevention strategies is ten times less expensive than responding to homelessness. The People's Budget investments, if realized, will not only keep people housed but also contribute to our ongoing efforts to address the housing and affordability crisis in the long term.

I appreciate your dedication to the well-being of Oregonians and thank you for your ongoing efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

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