

Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Andersen, Vice-Chair Breese-Iverson, and members of the House Committee on Housing and Homelessness

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2138-2.

I urge you to support this bill.

My name is Debbie Kitchin, I live in Portland and have owned a small business in remodeling for over 30 years. I am a member of Portland: Neighbors Welcome, a volunteer-led organization promoting housing abundance. But today I am here in support of HB 2138-2 as a mom and concerned community member.

My kids and their spouses are in their late 30s. They have good jobs including as teachers, working in non-profits or in government jobs. But they and many of their generation struggle to afford housing. Our young people, our families, our essential workers cannot afford housing. We are living through a crisis in housing supply and it is affecting people throughout our state, at all ages and stages of life. Having adequate and affordable housing is a fundamental building block to creating a better life for everyone.

This legislation breaks down barriers to building more middle housing, which is housing that people can afford. Cumbersome local processes or unnecessary requirements are preventing affordable options from being built. Oregon needs lawmakers to clear away remaining barriers to building the types of housing that will strengthen our communities and create housing security for all Oregonians.

I am disappointed that section 22-1-f regarding historic districts has been removed in the -2 amendments. We are in a housing crisis. This section, if left in, does not prevent local decisions to protect historic districts. It does not prevent locally approved historic districts. It just opens a path to having democratic oversight of historic districts by cities. Please do not weaken other provisions of HB 2138 that remove barriers to building middle housing. We are in a crisis and it is affecting Oregonians throughout the state. Housing is a basic human need and we need to respond to that need and make Oregon a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for considering my comments and for your diligent work to make Oregon a better place.