

## **Re: Support for POPs 501, 502, 504, and 505 in the OHCS Budget**

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexis Ames, and I serve as the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT), Oregon's only statewide, tenant-led renters' rights organization. I submit this testimony as an individual who has worked directly with renters across Oregon for nearly three years—people who are struggling to stay housed in an increasingly unaffordable housing market.

I am writing in strong support of Policy Option Packages 501, 502, 504, and 505 — the Homelessness Shelter, Re-Housing, and Prevention Packages in the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency Budget. These packages fund critical services that literally keep people from being pushed into homelessness and help stabilize families in crisis.

At CAT, I speak with tenants every week who are facing impossible choices—between rent and groceries, medication and keeping the lights on. It's emotionally heavy work because I see firsthand the trauma people experience when they lose their homes. Shelter, rent assistance, legal advocacy, and re-housing services aren't optional—they're lifelines. Without them, many of the renters I serve would fall through the cracks.

As a Black woman living in the Pacific Northwest, I also know that the housing crisis disproportionately impacts my community. Elevating and protecting communities of color must be part of Oregon's strategy to prevent homelessness. POPs 504 and 505 directly fund community-based and culturally specific services that reach the people most at risk.

We cannot afford to scale back. Oregon already has one of the highest rates of unsheltered homelessness in the nation. These Policy Option Packages fund programs that *work*—they prevent eviction, support shelter operations, and provide the re-housing support that helps people rebuild.

Please support:

- **POP 501:** \$217M for shelter and associated supports
- **POP 502:** \$188M for re-housing support and services
- **POPs 504 & 505:** \$173.2M for homelessness prevention, including emergency rent assistance, housing navigation, tenant support, legal advocacy, and culturally specific services

These are not just numbers—they are programs that change lives, protect families, and make sure no one in Oregon has to face homelessness alone. I urge the committee to fund all four POPs in full.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Alexis Ames