

Submitter: Keeley Reiners
On Behalf Of: Rogue Action Center
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

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

I am writing in strong support of Policy Option Packages 504 and 505, the Homelessness Prevention Package in the Oregon Housing and Community Services Agency Budget. These POPs will allocate \$173.2 million to ensure continuity of emergency rent assistance and community-based and culturally specific services designed to prioritize prevention of eviction and homelessness in communities across the state.

My name is Keeley Reiners (she/her), and I am a policy advocate writing on behalf of the Rogue Action Center, based in Southern Oregon. Our mission is to grow organizing power and leaders for a more just and thriving Southern Oregon. RAC builds community power for Housing Justice, Racial Justice, and Queer & Trans Liberation. We do so through base building, youth-centered leadership development, coalition building, and campaigns to change the rules. Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is foundational to every aspect of justice and wellbeing we fight for, and our community members are directly impacted by the housing crisis every day.

Oregon renters are the 5th most cost burdened in the nation, and our eviction crisis is growing with more than 27,000 cases filed last year. Approximately 88% of evictions are because tenants cannot afford Oregon's high rents. As housing costs rise, more families are being pushed into crisis. Oregon families are on the brink, and we must act now with real solutions.

The threat of homelessness is greatest for our most vulnerable neighbors: families with children, domestic violence survivors, and seniors. Elderly Oregonians are now the fastest-growing group losing their homes, and Oregon has the highest rate of youth homelessness in the nation. Eviction, displacement and homelessness have lifelong implications for health, education, and economic opportunities.

Solving our homelessness crisis is deeply challenging, but it is not impossible. There are evidence-based prevention solutions already in place to keep thousands of families, seniors, and hard-working Oregonians out of homelessness. Connecting people to eviction protection and homelessness prevention services such as navigation services and legal assistance is a proven approach to ensure people can stay housed. When we can prevent evictions, we can turn off the pipeline into

homelessness.

Preventing eviction is 5–10 times cheaper than letting someone fall into homelessness and trying to rehouse them later. Beyond cost, prevention also avoids trauma, job loss, school disruption, and health risks that come with homelessness.

We urge you to prioritize the critical and proven safety net continued by POPS 504 and 505. Please invest \$173.2 million to continue homelessness prevention and eviction intervention services and legal assistance, which are making a difference for thousands of Oregonians and stemming the tide of homelessness in our communities.

At Rogue Action Center, we hear regularly from individuals and families facing housing insecurity in Southern Oregon. We work alongside those directly impacted to lift their voices and build power toward systemic change. These investments in prevention are not only fiscally responsible, they are essential to ensuring that every Oregonian—regardless of income, background, or zip code—has the stability to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Keeley Reiners (she/her)
Policy Advocate
Rogue Action Center