

February 3, 2026

Oregon State Legislature

Senate Committee on Housing and Development

Re: Support for SB1523 (Bridging the Digital Divide)

Dear Chair Pham, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Development:

Thank you for considering my testimony. As a neurodivergent, disabled older person experiencing poverty and housing instability with little interest in technology and little money for devices, my computer experience is minimal at best. I have working-memory and focus issues from ADHD and working on the computer makes these symptoms worse. I experience postural pain issues preventing me from sitting at the computer for the time necessary to complete a process like filling out forms. As a result, applying for housing has been very difficult for me to do on my own.

Northwest Pilot Project has helped me with the pre-application and application process because of how many obstacles the digital process presents for me. Not only does one need a computer, one needs the latest updates, and most people struggling on social services don't have money for new devices. There are many quirks and errors with these sites, such as challenges with basic functions, like signing in and out, or having the site remember you, etc. Although I appreciate the Northwest Pilot Project assisting me in this process, I don't believe I would've needed their assistance had paper applications been available.

As technology becomes more prominent in housing, life gets increasingly harder for me and my disabled peers. Bots, apps and portals are not acceptable replacements for paper forms. These technologies are too new and incomplete in their programming, making it too soon to replace paper copies for this transition to be effective. Please make access to housing easier by making sure there's always the option of having paper copies for people who don't use technology.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lorraine Maenza', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lorraine Maenza