



**Chair Pham, Vice Chair
Anderson, and members of the committee,**

My name is Glenna Hayes and I am writing today on behalf of Self-Advocates Taking Action. I am the support staff for the group and help with scheduling, admin and echoing the concerns, ideas and wisdom of some members. Self-Advocates Taking Action is a grass roots organization made up of members who have intellectual/developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in the Portland Metro area.

SATA is in **strong support of SB 1576**, which would increase the number of accessible homes available to Oregonians with disabilities and older adults. Many of our members have mobility devices or use power chairs so accessibility is extremely important. One experience I want to highlight is a couple years ago we had someone who was trying to move out of group homes and into independent housing. This was a long process that took 2 years because affordable and accessible housing for someone who uses a power wheelchair is so limited. The first unit she was offered was not accessible, there was no elevator in the building. The second unit she was offered was also not accessible, it had one small step into the unit preventing her from entering.

We heard during the verbal testimony about modifications/ways to adapt the units to be accessible for people. We really want to urge legislators to not rely on this as the solution. When we need to modify or adapt our homes for access

we have to cover the cost to do it, and are obligated to return the unit back if we leave. This is impossible to do when we are on SSI and our monthly income is roughly \$960 a month. Modifications take thousands of dollars, sometimes in the double and trip digits to complete. Then the cost of returning the unit doubles that amount. There is no funding available to adapt/modify units, and with our low incomes we never can afford those kinds of costs. We cannot even save more than \$2,000 without it impacting our supports and services that keep us alive. Barrier after barrier to have accessible and affordable housing. We need a solution from the start, like making accessibility a foundation of property development.

We also want to say this not only helps folks with physical disabilities, this will help our elders. People age, our bodies change, and one day every one of us will have a disability either by accident or age. Again, we need solutions from the start that benefit us all rather than pushing this off onto individuals with disabilities. It is time we put people first, we put accessibility first, and we make the changes needed!

SB 1576 takes a practical and much-needed step forward by requiring that new housing include a higher percentage of units built to recognized accessibility standards. This will gradually increase the supply of homes that people with disabilities can actually use, and it will help ensure that Oregon's housing stock reflects the real needs of our population.

Improved accessibility promotes fairness, dignity, and the ability for every Oregonian to live safely and independently. SB 1576 helps address the root problem: there are far too few accessible homes available today.

For these reasons, we urge you to pass SB 1576.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to addressing Oregon's housing needs.